



G. Tardieu Sculp



G. Tardieu Sculp

12th Ed. 6
11. 6. 6.

SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of Faith in God.	Of the Omnipotence of God.
Of the Unity of God.	Of the Omniscience of God.
Of the Eternity of God.	Of the Wisdom of God.
Of the Spirituality of God.	Of the Goodness of God.
Of the Immutability of God.	Of the Patience of God.
Of the Omnipresence of God.	Of the Justice of God.

By *SAMUEL CLARKE*, D.D.
late Rector of St *James's*, *Westminster*.

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By *JOHN CLARKE*, D.D. Dean of *Sarum*.

VOL. I.

3rd Ed

With A PREFACE, giving some Account of the
LIFE, WRITINGS, and CHARACTER, of the AUTHOR:
By *BENJAMIN*, Lord Bishop of *Salisbury*.

L O N D O N,

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25

10 vol.





T O T H E
QUEEN.

MADAM,



BEG leave, in the most
humble manner, to pre-
sent to Your MAJES-
TY, a Body of Ser-
mons, not unworthy, I trust, of
Your Royal Countenance and Pro-
tection.

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T H E

DEDICATION.

THE near Relation in which the Author of Them stood to Me, makes it almost impossible for Me to know How to speak, upon this occasion, either of Him, or of His Writings.

I AM sensible, It would ill become Me to mix my private Griefs with the Duty I am now performing to his Memory: and much worse, to pretend to pass a Judgment upon His Works, for which I may justly be thought to have too defective a Capacity, and too tender a Partiality. They will All be soon before the World, to speak for Themselves: And then, the Character which They deserve, will certainly

DEDICATION.

certainly attend upon Them ,
with a much better Grace, from
the Consent of the Learned, the
Judicious, and the Disinterested
Part of Mankind.

BUT in one Point I must be
allowed to be the most pro-
per Judge : And to mention it
will justify Me in the present
Address to Your MAJESTY :
That had Dr *Clarke* himself been
to direct, To Whom these Dis-
courses of His should be in-
scribed ; He would have named
no Other, than That QUEEN,
in whose Favour He himself
had lived ; from whose Patronage
He had enjoyed so much Ho-
nour ; and of whose high Accom-
plishments He had conceived so
great an Opinion.

DEDICATION.

UPON these Subjects, MADAM, I have a Right to speak: And it would indeed, be Injustice to his Memory for Me to be silent, who was, thro' so many Years, a Witness to the Sentiments He express'd upon Them. He would often be speaking of Them, not so much with the Pleasure of a Person highly distinguish'd by the frequent Attendances upon Your MAJESTY, to which He was admitted; as with the Satisfaction of a truly Philosophical and well-disposed Mind, delighted with the Sight and Prospect of Something of Universal Good Influence.

COMPLIMENT

DEDICATION.

COMPLIMENT and Courtlinefs towards the Appearances of Grandeur ; an Undue Elevation of Heart upon the Uncommon Share of Favor He enjoyed ; or a Selfish Application of Soul to make it fubfervient to his own Gain or Advancement : Thefe were far removed from the Turn of his Mind ; and never once appeared either in his Difcourfe, or in his Behaviour. The Satisfaction which ufed to fhew itfelf in Him, was Manly and Chriftian ; and the Perfonal Honour done to Himfelf was the Leaft part of it. If indeed, He had not entertained and exprefs'd a due Senfe of Your MAJESTY's particular Regard to Himfelf ; He had been Unworthy of it : But This was not

DEDICATION.

the Agreeable part of the Subject to Him.

Y O U R uncommon Capacity, and Extensive Understanding; Your Quickness in apprehending the Force of Evidence, and Your Sagacity in discovering the Failures in the most plausible Pretenses to it; Your Impartial Regard to Truth, and Constant Enquiry after it; Your Universal Charity and Tenderneſs to All, amidst our Various and Contradictory Opinions; Your Generous Concern for Religious and Civil Liberty, and Abhorrence of Every Sort and Every Degree of Persecution and Oppression; Your Love of the Happiness of Mankind in General, and Your Passion for the Interests of this Nation in particular:

DEDICATION.

ticular : ——— These were the Topics, upon which He would with pleasure enlarge. From These He presaged great Good to Religion itself ; and Happiness to All who should live within the Influence of so many Excellencies placed in so Exalted a Station.

AND as These Expressions of Regard to Your High Accomplishments, are the Testimony of a Person, who formed his Judgment upon Experience ; and a Testimony often given in private, where He could have no Temptation either to disguise his Real Thoughts, or to profess any Other ; it is impossible that Flattery can be supposed to have had any part in Them. They were the Sentiments
of

DEDICATION.

of his Heart : And from the Remembrance of Them I receive this satisfaction, That, in what I am now doing, I have His Voice and Concurrence ; and that, as These Discourses are His, so the Dedication of Them to Your MAJESTY may, in no improper sense, be said to be His also.

NAY, if I may be permitted to go a little farther, I will add That, if Dr *Clarke* himself were to chuse, under what Character He would be described and known to Posterity, He would wish That from Other Points it might rise at last into This, That whilst He lived He was honoured with the frequent Conversations of a QUEEN, as much distinguished by Her Capacity

DEDICATION.

capacity and Taste of Good sense, as by Her Excellent Behaviour in Every Relation of Life.

PERMITT therefore, MADAM, his Works now to rest under the same Patronage, which He himself once enjoyed. Suffer these Remains of His to be consecrated to that Great Person who esteem'd and cherish'd their Author; and to shelter Themselves under that Royal Name which was the Glory of His last Years.

AND permitt Me, MADAM, at the same time to acknowledge, with all the Sentiments of a Gratefull Heart, the Many Expressions of Your Regard to
i His

DEDICATION.

His Memory, as well as Your
Generous Goodness and Benefi-
cence to Myself, since His
death: and to profess Myself,
with all possible Respect and
Duty,

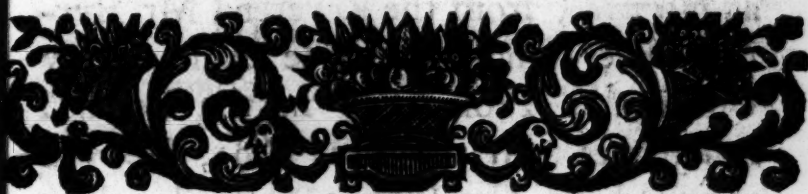
MADAM,

Your MAJESTY,

Most Devoted and

Most Humble Servant,

Catharine Clarke.



THE
P R E F A C E,

Giving some Account of the LIFE,
WRITINGS, *and* CHARACTER,
of the AUTHOR.



R. SAMUEL CLARKE

was born at *Norwich*, Oct. 11.

A. D. 1675. His Father was

Edward Clarke, Esq; Alder-

man of That City, and One of

the Representatives of It, in Parliament,

for several Years: A Person of an Excel-

lent Natural Capacity, and of an untaint-

ed Reputation for Probity and all Virtue.

His Mother was *Hannah*, the Daughter

of Mr. *Samuel Parmenter*, Merchant, of

the same City. He received the first

Rudiments of Learning in the Free-school at *Norwich*, from the Reverend Mr. *Burton*, under whose Care He made a very Uncommon Proficiency in the Learned Languages. In the Year 1691, He was removed to *Cambridge*, and placed at *Caius College*, under the Tuition of Mr. *Ellis*, afterwards Sir *John Ellis*. And here, His Impatient Thirst after True Knowledge, and his Great Capacity both for discovering and improving it, presently began to shew Themselves.

THE Philosophy of *Des Cartes* was then the *Established Philosophy* of that *University*; and the System of Nature hardly allowed to be explained any otherwise than by *His Principles*: Which, at best, were evidently no more than the Inventions of a very Ingenious and Luxuriant Fancy; having no Foundation in the Reality of Things, nor any Correspondency to the Certainty of Facts. His *Tutor* himself, though a Learned Man, and for ever to be honoured for his Conscientious Care of All under Him, was a Zelot for this Philosophy; and as He was Most Diligent in reading to his Pupils, without doubt gave Them

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Them the most favourable Impressions of what He had so closely embraced Himself; and but little Encouragement to strike out Any Light in another way of thinking. The Great Sir *Isaac Newton* had indeed then published his *Principia*. But this Book was but for The Few: both the Manner and Matter of it placing it out of the Reach of the Generality even of Learned Readers; and strong Prejudice, in favour of what had been received, working against It. But neither the Difficulty of the Task, nor the Respect He paid to the Director of his Studies; nor the Warmth and Prejudice of All around Him, had any Effect upon his Mind. Not at all satisfied, therefore, with *Hypotheses* arbitrarily adapted to Appearances; He set himself immediately to the Study of what was Real and Substantial: And in This Study He made such uncommon Advances, that He was presently Master of the Chief parts of the *Newtonian Philosophy*; and, in order to his First *Degree*, performed a Publick Exercise in the Schools, upon a *Question* taken from thence, which surprized the Whole Audience, both for the Accuracy of Knowledge, and Clearness of Expression,

Expression, that appeared through the Whole. Such an Example could not but be of great use, to animate All around Him. But He was not content with the Service He could do to *True Philosophy*, by his Example only.

As soon as He had taken that first *Degree*, Young as He was, He made an Effort for the Service of the Students, which ought not to be forgotten. The System of *Natural Philosophy* then generally taught in the *University*, was That written by *Mons. Robault*; entirely founded on the *Cartesian* Principles; and very ill translated into *Latin*. He justly thought that Philosophical Notions might be express'd in pure *Latin*: And if He had gone no farther than This, He would have merited of All Those who were to draw their Knowledge out of that Book. But His Aim was much higher than the making a Better Translation of it. He resolved to add to It such Notes, as might lead the Young Men insensibly, and by degrees, to Other and Truer Notions than what could be found there. And this certainly, was a More Prudent Method of introducing Truth unknown before,

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before, than to attempt to throw aside this Treatise entirely, and write a New one instead of it. The Success answered exceedingly well to His Hopes: And He may justly be stiled a Great Benefactor to the *University*, in this Attempt. For, by this Means, the True Philosophy has without any Noise prevailed: and to this Day, His *Translation of Robault* is, generally speaking, the Standing Text for *Lectures*; and His *Notes* the first Direction to Those who are willing to receive the Reality and Truth of Things in the place of Invention and Romance. And thus before He was much above Twenty Years old, He furnished the Students with a *System* of Knowledge, which has been ever since, and still continues to be, a Publick Benefit to All who have the happiness of a Liberal and Learned Education in that *University*.

IMMEDIATELY after this, His Thoughts were turned to *Divinity*; which he proposed to make the peculiar Study and Profession of his Life: For the prosecution of which Design He soon met with a very favorable Opportunity. Dr. *John Moore*, then Lord Bishop of *Norwich*,
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the greatest Patron of Learning and of Learned Men, that this Age has produced, had already fix'd his Eyes upon Mr. *Clarke*, as a Young Man, of a Genius much exalted above the Common rank, and promising Great Things to the World in his riper Years. He resolv'd to make Him his *Chaplain*, as soon as He should be Old Enough to take Orders. And when He did so, at the same time He received Him into his Familiarity and Friendship, to such a remarkable degree, that He lived for twelve Years in that Station, with All the decent Freedoms of a Brother and an Equal rather than an Inferior. The whole Family counted Themselves happy in Him, as an Intimate Friend. The Bishop's Value for Him increased every day, as his Knowledge of Him increased. There was no Mark of Confidence, as well as Esteem, which that Prelate did not shew Him, as long as He lived: And at his death, the highest Mark of Confidence He could give Him, was the Leaving all the Concerns of his Family solely in His hands; a Trust, which He executed with the most faithful Exactness,

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actness, and to the Entire Satisfaction of Every Person concerned. To return,

HIS first Studies, in order to fit Himself for the Office He proposed to undertake, were, The *Old Testament* in the Original *Hebrew*; The *New* in its Original *Greek*; and the *primitive* Christian Writers. The *First* of These He then read with that Exactness of Judgment, which very Few have shewn after a much longer Application; and which furnished Him with Many Observations written at that time with his own hand in the *Margen*, relating to the Mistakes of the Common *Translation* of it. The *New Testament* he read with a true Critical Accuracy: And, with great Care, pursued his Design farther, through the Writers of the Earliest Ages, in order to discover, if possible, the Genuine Sentiments and Customs of Antiquity; as well as to support the Authority and True Interpretation of the sacred Books. The Result of all this Application appeared so early as the Year 1699, in *Two Treatises*. The one was designed for the promoting of the Practice of Religion, under the Title of *Three Practical Essays* upon
b 2 *Baptism,*

Baptism, Confirmation, and Repentance. The other, without his Name, was entitled *Some Reflexions* on (a Book call'd) *Amyntor*, relating to the *primitive Fathers*, and the *Canon* of the *New Testament*. I mention Them here, not to put them upon the level with his Other Performances; but only as having upon them the plain Marks of a Christian Frame of mind; and as Proofs of his Knowledge in the Writings of those Early Ages, even at his first setting out into the World.

FROM these Attempts, He proceeded, without Intermiſſion, to Others of ſtill greater Importance: making Uſe of the Leiſure and Freedom He enjoyed in his Patron's Family, and of One of the Nobleſt Private Collection of Books which ever appear'd in *England*, for the Purpoſe He had chiefly in his Eye; the Underſtanding the Phraſeology of the *Holy Scriptures*, and the Explaining the Meaning of Them ſo, as to make Them uſeful to All who are concerned in them. The firſt *Eſſay*, in this Deſign, was His *Paraphraſe* upon St. *Matthew's* Goſpel, publiſhed in the Year 1701: and ſoon followed by *Paraphraſes* upon the *Goſpels*

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of *St. Mark, Luke, and John*. These were written with a manly plainness and perspicuity; and accompanied with a very few short *Notes*, where Any Critical Explication was necessary. Of how great benefit These have been, and always will be, to Those *English* Readers, who have Sense and Goodness enough to be pleased with a just Representation of the True Meaning of what is recorded in the Gospel; I need not say. Experience has already said enough of the Usefulness of such a Manner of Interpretation, from so masterly an Hand. It were highly to be wished that He had pursued his Original Design, and completed the Work upon the Whole *New Testament*: in many Books of which, the Intricate *Connexion* of the Parts; the seeming Perplexity of the *Argument*; and the *Obscurity* of the *Style* at this distance of Time, particularly call'd for the Assistance of so Critical an Understanding, capable of finding out the True Ideas annexed to the old Words; and of discovering the hidden Force of Those Reasonings, which would otherwise escape the view of Common Readers. He had indeed, actually begun

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his *Paraphrase* upon the the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, immediately after the Others were publish'd; and had certainly proposed to Himself to go through All the remaining Books. But something accidental interrupted the Execution: and it is now only to be lamented that Any thing first diverted Him from it; or that He did not afterwards prevail upon Himself to resume and compleat so Excellent a Work; which His Friends often press'd upon Him; and to which He would sometimes answer, That it was made less necessary by the Labours of several Worthy and Learned Persons, since the appearance of his Work upon the *Four Gospels*.

BISHOP Moore, who was every day confirmed in the high Opinion of his Superior Talents, and Excellent Qualifications, very justly thought that there was No place so deserving of such a person, and so fit for Such Abilities to exert Themselves in, for the Good of Mankind, as the *Metropolis* of the Kingdom: And it very soon became his Settled Resolution, to make use of all his Interest, which at that time was very considerable amongst the Greatest Men of the

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the Nation, in order to fix Him in the most remarkable Scene of Action. But, in the mean while, He gave Him the Rectory of *Drayton* near *Norwich*, and procured for Him a *Parish* in that *City*; both together of very inconsiderable value: and These He served himself in the Season, when the *Bishop* resided at *Norwich*. His preaching at first was without Notes; and so continued till He was *Rector* of *St. James's*: A Method, in which He was peculiarly happy; not by trusting to his Memory entirely, and speaking a Sermon composed before, in which some have excelled; nor by hearing himself gradually into Any sort of Passion, to which *Others* have owed all their Fluency of Language; but by a Certain Strength and Coolness of Head, which could not easily be surprized or deceived; and a Certain Faculty of Expression, which was hardly ever at a loss for plain and proper words.

IN the Year 1704. He was call'd forth to an Office worthy of such an Understanding. It was to preach Mr. *Boyle's* Lecture, founded by that Honourable Gentleman, to assert and vindicate the

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Great Fundamentals of Natural and Reveled Religion. This was a Province, for which if ever Any one was peculiarly fitted by Natural Parts, and Learning; He was the Man. And He executed this Trust in such a Manner, that He at once surprized, and instructed, his most Understanding Hearers. He exceded the Expectations, even of Those who knew Him enough to expect Great Things from Him: and laid the Foundations of True Religion too deep and strong to be shaken either by the Superstition of Some, or the Infidelity of Others. The Subject of his Discourses was, The Existence of GOD, or of a Being of All possible Perfections. And in the Demonstration of This, He chose particularly to consider the Arguings of *Spinoza* and *Hobbes*, the most plausible Patrons of the System of *Fate* and *Necessity*; a *System*, which by destroying All true Freedom of Action in Any Intelligent Being, at the same time destroys All that can be styled Virtue, or Praiseworthy. This being a *Subject*, into which All the Subtilties and Querks of Metaphysics had entred, and thrown their usual Obscurity and Intricacy; the Difficulty

culty lay in clearing away this Rubbish of Confusion; in introducing a Language that could be understood; in clothing the clearest Ideas in this plain and Manly Language; and in concluding Nothing, but from such Evidence as amounts to *Demonstration*. And thus it was that the Masterly hand appeared. He began with Self-evident *Propositions*. From them He advanced to Such as received their Proof from the Former. In these He took no Step till He had secured the Way before Him. Throughout the Whole, No Word is used, but what is Intelligible to All who are at all versed in such *Subjects*, and what expresses the Clear Idea in the Mind of Him who makes use of it: and All is one Regular Building, erected upon an Unmoveable Foundation; and rising up, from One Stage to Another, with equal Strength and Dignity.

HIS Labours succeeded so well in This Great Attempt, that He was appointed to preach again, the next Year. And here He went on with the same Method, Clearness, and Strength, to deduce from What He had before proved, and to strengthen with all proper Arguments,

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The Evidences of Natural and Reveled Religion. In these Discourses He laid the Foundations of Morality deep, in the mutual Relations of Things and Persons, one to Another; in the Unalterable Fitness of some Actions, and the Unfitness of Others: and in the Will of the Great Creator of All things, evident from his making Man capable of seeing these Relations, and this Fitness; of judging concerning Them; and of acting agreeably to that Judgment. He then proceeded to demonstrate the Christian Religion to be worthy of God, from the *Internal* Evidence, taken from the perfect Agreeableness of It's Main Design to the Light of Nature; and to All the Moral Obligations of Eternal Reason; without which Agreeableness, All the Arguments in the World could never conclude in it's favor: And, after this, to prove It to be actually recommended to the World by GOD, from All the *External* Evidence, of Prophecy going before it, and Miraculous Works performed expressly for the honour and propagation of it. All which He executed with such Masterly Sense, and perspicuity of Expression, as recommend-
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ed both the Preacher and the Subject to All who heard Him. These two Courses of *Sermons* were soon printed in Two Continued *Treatises*: which was thought to be the most usefull Way of publishing them to the World. Several *Editions* of them have already been printed; in Every One of which the *Author* did not scruple to make such Alterations and Additions, as seem'd to Him necessary either for the preventing any Mistakes, or the farther Clearing up the Important Subjects of Them. I shall say nothing farther about Them, but that Every Christian in *this* Country, in which They first saw the Light, ought to esteem Them as *His Treasure*; as They contain the True Strength not only of *Natural*, but of *Reveled* Religion: Which, if ever it be removed from such a Foundation; or separated from such an Alliance with Reason and Uncorrupted Nature, will not long subsist in the Belief of Understanding Persons, after such a separation. And therefore, *What God hath joined together, let no Man put asunder.*

So on

SOON after the preaching of these *Sermons*, Bishop Moore found an Opportunity of bringing Him to Town; and procured for Him, by his Interest, the Rectory of St Bennet's *Paul's-Wharf*. Many in that Parish still remember how Instructive and Acceptable his Preaching was to All in it: And He himself never forgot, but frequently with pleasure recounted, the very particular Civilities He received from the *Gentlemen of Doctors Commons*, who made the most considerable Part of his Audience.

ABOUT this time the Learned Mr *Dodwell* published a very remarkable Discourse: in which, in order to exalt the Powers and Dignity of the *Priesthood*, in that *One Communion*, which He imagined to be the *Peculium* of GOD, and to which He had joined Himself, He endeavour'd to prove, with his usual perplexity of Learning, That the Doctrine of the Soul's *Natural Mortality* was the True and Original Doctrine; and that *Immortality* was only at *Baptism* conferr'd upon the Soul, by the Gift of GOD, thro' the hands of One Sett of regularly-ordained Clergy. The Mischievous Tendency of these Doctrines,
thus

thus blended together, as it was back'd by the Great Name of the Author in the *Learned* World, made it more necessary that an Answer should be given to What might from Another hand perhaps have been received as a Design'd Banter and Ridicule both upon Natural and Instituted Religion. Mr *Clarke* was thought the most proper Person for this Work. And He did it in so excellent a Manner, both with regard to the *Philosophical* part, and to the Opinions of some of the *Primitive Writers*, upon Whom these Doctrines were fixed; that It gave Universal Satisfaction. Nor did He stop here. For, a very Ingenious *Gentleman*, having laid hold on this favorable opportunity of coming into this Controversy, as a Second to Mr *Dodwell*, went much farther into the *Philosophy* of the Dispute; and indeed seemed to produce All that could plausibly be said against the *Immateriality* of the *Soul*, as well as the *Liberty* of *Humane Actions*. This enlarged the Scene of the *Dispute*: into which Mr *Clarke* enter'd, and wrote with such a Spirit of Clearness, and Demonstration, as at once shew'd Him greatly superior to his Adversaries in *Metaphysical*

tical and *Physical* Knowledge; and made Every Intelligent Reader rejoyce that Such an Incident had happen'd, to provoke and extort from Him that Plenty of strong Reasoning, and Perspicuity of Expression, which were indeed very much wanted upon this Intricate and obscure Subject. And I am perswaded that, as What He has writ in this Controversy, comprehends the Little that the Antients had said well; and adds still more Evidence than ever clearly appear'd before; and all in Words that have a Meaning to them: It will remain the Standard of Good Sense on That side of the Question on which He spent so many of his Thoughts, as upon One of his Favorite-Points.

ABOUT this time, His Worthy Patron brought Him to *Court*, and procured Him to be made One of the *Chaplains* in *Ordinary* to Queen *ANNE*; to whose greater Favor His own Excellent Qualifications recommended Him so soon and so powerfully, that, upon the Vacancy of *St James's Westminster*, She immediately consented to the Request of the *Bishop* and presented Him to that *Rectory*. In this Station, which placed Him in the observation of Many of

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the *Noblest* part of our World, How He conducted Himself for above *Twenty years*; What an Undisturbed Unanimity there was between Him, and all his Parishioners, thro' the whole Time; What his Preaching, and What his Conversation were; how instructive *Both*, and how acceptable, to All of Every Sort and Party into which We are distinguish'd; Let *Them* testify who were Eye-Witnesses and Ear-Witnesses to Them: who all equally rejoiced in his Discourses and in his Presence whilst He was alive; and equally lamented their own Loss, at his Death. As soon as He was settled in this Parish, He left off his former Way of preaching without the assistance of Notes; and made it one of his chief Studies to compose, and write down, as accurate *Sermons* as He could. Not, as I believe, because He could not proceed in the former Method, with a Copiousness of Good Sense and Clear Expression, which the Noblest Audience might with pleasure have attended to; but chiefly, because from that Time It became his Resolution to prepare his Sermons in such a Manner, that They might hereafter be as Usefull from the *Press*, as He

He wished Them then to be from the *Pulpit*.

UPON his Advancement to such a Station, it was esteemed a Piece of Decency for Him to take the *Degree of Doctor in Divinity*, for which He was now of sufficient Standing in the *University*. For this purpose, He went down to *Cambridge*, and proposed his Two Questions; and performed a long *publick Exercise* upon Them; the Memory of which will, I believe, remain, and be delivered down from one Succession of the *Learned* in that University to Another. The *Royal Professor* of Divinity, Dr *James*, who was a Learned, Ready, and very Acute Disputer, exerted Himself, beyond what was his Common Practice, in order to oppose and try Him to the Utmost. By the help of a Great Memory, and Fluency of Words, and a certain Knack in the Art of Disputing, He first went into a long *Examination* of Dr *Clarke's Thesis*, sifting Every part of it with the strictest Nicety; and afterwards, press'd Him with all the Force of *Syllogism*, in it's various Forms, thro' the Course of the *Disputation*. Here was an *Adversary* worthy of such a Respondent. To the
former

former Dr Clarke made an *Extempore* Reply, in a continued Discourse for near half an hour : in which, without any hesitation either for Thoughts or for Language, He took off the Force of All that the *Professor* had said, in such a Manner, that Many of the Auditors declared Themselves astonished; and own'd that, if They had not been within Sight of Him, They should have supposed Him to have read Every word of this *Reply* out of a Paper. After this, thro' the Course of the *Syllogistical* Disputation, He guarded so well against the Arts which the *Professor* was Master of, in perfection; He replied so readily to the greatest Difficulties that such an *Objector* could propose; and press'd upon the *Professor* so close and so hard with his Answers, clear and intelligible to All; that perhaps Never was such a Conflict heard in those *Schools*; never such a Disputation kept up for so long a time with such Spirit; nor ever Any, which Ended with greater, if Equal honour, to the *Respondent*. The *Professor* himself, who was a Man of *Humour* as well as *Learning*, said to Him aloud, towards the End of the Disputation,

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Profecto,

Profecto, Me probé exacuisti : which I hardly know how to interpret to the *English Reader*, unless by a phrase of a low kind, *In truth You have thoroughly rubb'd me up.* This was look'd upon as a very high Compliment, in *His* humorous way of speaking. And the Learned Members of that Body, who had with pleasure attended to Every part of the whole *Disputation*, went away discourfing to one another of the Unusual Entertainment They had had in the Schools; not a little pleased with fuch an Ornament to their own University: and admiring particularly, That, after an Absence of fo many Years, and a long course of Business of quite Another Nature, They heard Him now handling the Subjects He undertook, in fuch a masterly Manner, as if This fort of Academical Exercise had been his Constant Employment; and with fuch a Fluency and Purity of Expreffion, as if he had been accustomed, thro' this whole Time, to no other Language in Conversation but *Latin*.

Soon after this, Another Scene opened. He had for a confiderable time employed his Thoughts and Studies upon a Subject
of

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of a very high Nature, which had exercised the Pens of Many of the greatest Divines; I mean, The Doctrine of the *Trinity*: and was now come to a settled Judgment about it. But, let Every Man of sense be Judge with how much Wisdom, and in how Christian a Method, He proceeded to form his own Sentiments upon so Important a Point. He knew, and All men agreed, That it was a Matter of *Mere Revelation*. He did not therefore, retire into his Closet; and set himself to invent and forge a plausible *Hypothesis*, which might sit easily upon his own Mind. He had not recourse to Abstract and *Metaphysical* Reasonings, to cover or patronize any *System* He might have embraced before. But, as a Christian, He laid open the *New Testament* before Him. He search'd out *Every Text*, in which Mention was made of the *Three Persons*, or of Any One of them. He accurately examined the Meaning of the Words used about Every one of Them: and by the best Rules of *Grammar* and *Critique*, and by his Skill in Language, He endeavor'd to fix plainly What was declared about Every Person; and What was Not. And what He

thought He had discover'd to be the *Truth*, He published, under the *Title* of *The Scripture-Doctrine* of the *Trinity*.

I AM far from taking upon Me to determine, in so difficult a Question, between Him, and Those who made Replies to Him. The Debate soon grew very warm: and in a little time seem'd to rest principally upon *Him*, and *One* particular Adversary, very skilful in the Management of a Debate, and very Learned and well-versed in the Writings of the Antient Fathers. The *Controversy* has been long before the World: and All who can read what has been alledged on both Sides, ought to judge for Themselves. But This, I hope, I may be allowed to say, That Every Christian Divine, and Layman, ought to pay his Thanks to Dr. *Clarke*, for the Method into which He brought this Dispute; and for that Collection of *Texts* of the *New Testament*, by which at last it must be decided; on which side soever the Truth be supposed to lie. And let Me add this one word more, That, since Men of such Thought and such Learning, have shewn the World, in their own Example, how widely the

most honest Enquirers after *Truth* may differ, upon such Subjects: This methinks, should a little abate our Mutual Censures; and a little take off from our Positiveness, about the Necessity of explaining, in *this* or *that* one determinate Sense, the Ancient Passages relating to Points of so Sublime a Nature.

I PASS over the Complaint made, in Convocation, Against this Treatise concerning the *Scripture-Doctrine* of the *Trinity*: because it soon ended, upon the *Right Reverend*, the Members of the *Upper-house*, having declared Themselves satisfied with the Explanations which the *Author* delivered in to Them, upon the *Subject* of the *Complaint*.

ONE Matter of Fact I will add, That from the Time of his publishing this *Book*, to the Day of his *Death*, He found no reason, as far as He was able to judge, to alter the Notions which He had there professed, concerning the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, towards Any of Those *Schemes* which seem'd to Him to derogate from the *Honour* of the *Father*, on one side; or from That of the *Son*, and *Spirit*, on the other. This I thought proper just to

mention, as what All his Friends know to be the *Truth*. And indeed, nothing to the Contrary can be alledged, without contradicting many Express Sentences, scattered through All his Works which have followed, or will follow, the foremention'd *Treatise*; evidently setting forth, or implying, the same Doctrine.

FROM the Time of his taking possession of St *James's*, His Residence was where his Heart and his Employment were; in the *Rectory-House*, in the midst of his Parishioners; seldom leaving the Place at all, unless for a few weeks, in the *long Vacation*, when the Town was Empty: which He spent in visiting his Friends at *Norwich*, and other places; and, towards the latter part of his Life, in doing his Duty as Master of *Wigston's Hospital* at *Leicester*: a *Post* of no very great profit, but made agreeable to Him by the handsome Manner in which the late Lord *Lechmere* invited Him into it; and by the Method of taking possession of it, free from some of those Circumstances which by Law attend upon most other Preferments.

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DURING the Time of his being *Rector* of *St James's*, besides the regular performance of All the other Offices of his Profession, He followed the Custom of his *Predecessors*, in reading *Lectures* upon the *Church-Catechism*, every *Thursday* morning, for some months in the Year. In the latter part of his Time, He revised These with great Care; and left Them, under the Title of An *Exposition* upon That *Catechism*, completely prepared for the *Press*. This *Exposition* has been published, according to his own express Desire, since his Death. The *Remarks* of a *Learned Man* followed it, as soon as it could well be read in the World. An *Answer* has been made to these *Remarks*: and the World must judge on which side Truth and Light appear.

BUT tho' *Divinity*, and the Studies peculiar to his Profession, were his great Employment; yet this did not hinder his Genius from shewing itself in Other sorts of Learning, worthy of a Man, and of a Clergyman. The first Specimen He gave the World of his Knowledge in the *Profane Authors*, was his Edition of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, 1712. dedicated to his Grace

the Duke of MARLBOROUGH, at a Time, when his Unequal'd Victories and Successes had raised his Glory to the highest pitch abroad, and lessen'd his Interest and Favor at Home. Of this I shall only say, That there are few Books in the World, that excell It, either for Beauty or Correctness; and that the *Notes* added shew the *Accuracy* of their Author.

THE last Instance of his *Critical* and *Classical* Learning was the Last Piece He published: The first *Twelve Books* of *Homer's Ilias*, with an almost New *Translation*, and *Notes*. *Homer* was his Admired Author, even to a degree of Something like *Enthusiasm* hardly natural to his Temper. In this He went a little beyond the Bounds of *Horace's* Judgment: and was so unwilling to allow the *Favorite-Poet* ever to *Nod*, that He has taken remarkable pains to find out and give a Reason for Every Passage, Word, and Tittle, that could create any suspicion. The Translation, with his Corrections, may now be styled Accurate: and his *Notes*, as far as They go, are indeed a Treasury of *Grammatical* and *Critical* Knowledge. He was called to this Task, by Royal Command:
and

and He has performed it in such a Manner, as to be Worthy of the *Young Prince*, for whose Use it was laboured. The Praises given to this Excellent Work, by the Writers abroad in their *Memoirs*; as well as by the Learned Masters of the Three principal Schools of *England*; Those of *Westminster*, *Eaton*, and *St Paul's*; and the Short Character, That the Performance was *Supra omnem invidiam*, bestowed by One whom Dr *Clarke* himself had long before styled, *Criticos unus omnes longé longéque ----- antecellens*, and whom Every one will know by that Title without my naming Him, make it unnecessary to add a Word upon this Subject.

IN the midst of his Other Labours, He found time also to shew His Regard to the *Mathematical* and *Physical* Studies; and his Exact Knowledge and Skill in them. For *these* indeed, He had a sort of a Natural Affection, and Capacity; which were greatly improved by the particular Friendship of the Incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton*, whose Death only put an End to it; and by the Light communicated to Him from his Writings and Conversation. At Sir *Isaac's* Request,
He

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He translated His Treatise of *Optics*, into that pure and intelligible *Latin*, which has sent it all over *Europe* in a plainer and less ambiguous Style, than the *English Language* will sometimes permitt. And after the death of that Great Man, He vindicated his Doctrine about the *Velocity* and *Force* in *Bodies in Motion*, from the Objections of some late Mathematicians, in a short, plain, and Masterly Letter, printed in the Transactions of the Royal Society, N^o 401. 1728. and in a manner sufficient to shew the excellent Greatness of his *Genius* for these *Subjects* as well as Others.

I MUST not pass by a very remarkable Controversy, which lasted long, in a private manner, between Him and the learned Mr. *Leibnitz*; and afterwards was published, and inscribed to Her present MAJESTY, who was pleased to have it pass through Her hands: and was the Witness and Judge of every Step of it. It related chiefly to the Important and Difficult Subjects of *Liberty* and *Necessity*. This *Liberty*, or *Moral Agency*, was a *Darling Point* to Him. He excelled always, and shewed a Superiority to All, whenever

whenever it came into Private Discourse, or Publick Debate. But He never more excell'd, than when He was press'd with the Strength this *Learned Adversary* was Master of: which made Him exert All his Talents to set it once again in a Clear light; to guard it against the Evil of *Metaphysical Obscurities*; and to give the finishing Stroke to a *Subject*, which must ever be the *Foundation* of Morality in Man; and is the Sole Ground of the Accountableness of Intelligent Creatures for all their Actions. And as This was the last of Dr. *Clarke's* Works relating to a Subject which had been, by the Writings of Cloudy or Artfull Men, render'd so intricate; I shall take the Liberty to say, with regard to All of the same Tendency, from his First Discourse about the Being of GOD, to these Letters; That what He has written to clear and illustrate this Cause, does now stand, and will for ever remain, before the World, a lasting Monument of a *Genius*, which could throw in Light where Darkness used to reign; and force Good Sense and Plain Words, into what was almost the *Privileged place of Obscurity*, and Unintelligible

intelligible Sounds. For such indeed, had the *Subject* before Us been, under the hands of Most who had written upon it; either through a *desire* of darkening it by Words without Meaning, or through an *Inability* of discoursing clearly and consistently about it.

SUCH was the Conduct, and such was the Life, of Dr. *Clarke*; full of Designs and Works, becoming a Truly Great Man, intimately concern'd for his own Real Happiness; and for That of All Intelligent Creatures and Moral Agents around Him. And, in the midst of All these *Studies* and Labours, His Natural *Constitution* of *Body* was in appearance so good; and his Care of his health was so constantly and regularly prudent; that All the Friends to his Person, and to True Knowledge, promised Themselves and the World a much longer Enjoyment of such Useful Accomplishments, than it pleased GOD to afford Them. He pass'd his Life, without any Indisposition bad enough to confine Him, except That of the *Small-Pox* in his Youth, till his last Illness: though, since his Death, many little Particulars, and Complaints
have

have been call'd to mind, which seem to have been Evident *Symptoms* of some Weakness, or Somewhat wrong, which He used to feel within. On *Sunday, May 11. 1729.* He went out in the Morning, to preach before the *Judges at Serjeant's-Inn*: and there was seized with a *Pain* in his Side, which made it impossible for Him to perform the Office He was called to; and quickly became so violent that He was obliged to be carried home. He went to bed; and thought Himself so much better in the Afternoon, that He would not suffer Himself to be blouded: against which Remedy He had indeed entertained strong prejudices. But the Pain returning very violently about Two the next Morning, made the Advice and Assistance of a very Able Physician absolutely necessary: Who, after twice bleeding Him, and other applications, thought Him, as He also thought Himself, to be out of all Danger; and so continued to think, till the *Saturday* Morning following: When, to the inexpressible Surprize of All about Him, the *Pain* removed from his *Side* to his *Head*; and, after a very short Complaint, took away his Senses,

Senses, so as that They never returned any more. He continued breathing till between seven and eight in the Evening of that Day, *May 17. 1729.* and then died: and by his Death (Let me be permitted to say it) left the World destitute of as Bright a *Light*, and as Masterly a Teacher of *Truth* and *Virtue*, as ever yet appeared amongst Us.

HE married *Catharine*, the only Daughter of the Reverend Mr *Lockwood*, Rector of *Little Massingham* in the County of *Norfolk*; in whose Good Sense and Unblameable Behaviour He was happy to his Death. By Her, He had *Seven* Children; *Two* of which died before Him, and *One*, in a few weeks after Him.

HE was a Person of a *Natural Genius*, excellent enough to have placed Him in the Superior rank of Men, without the Acquirements of *Learning*: and of *Learning* enough, to have render'd a much less Comprehensive *Genius* very considerable in the Eyes of the World. But in *Him* They were both united, to such a degree, that Those who were of his intimate Acquaintance, knew not which to admire
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most.

most. The First Strokes of Knowledge, in some of its Branches, seem'd to be little less than *Natural* to Him: For They appear'd to lie right in His Mind, as soon as Any thing could appear; and to be the very same which afterwards grew up with Him, into perfection, as the Strength and Cultivation of his Mind increased. He had one Happiness very rarely known amongst the Greatest Men, That his *Memory* was almost equal to his *Judgment*: which is as Great a Character as can well be given of it. It did not indeed, appear in Trifles; nor in Every part of Knowledge: But in Those particularly which regarded the Classcal and purest Writers of the Antients; or Any Part of Real and Experimental Philosophy; as well as what can truly be called *Theology*, It was surprizingly excellent; and of wonderful Use to Him, through all his Studies, and all his Conversation.

IN *Divinity*, it was his great Aim to settle beyond all Contradiction what must be the Support of True Religion; and then to shew the Evidences for what must rely upon That Support. The *necessary Existence* of One only GOD, and the Impossibility of the *Existence* of More
Than

Than One, He justly esteem'd as the *Foundation* of All. This necessary *Unity* of the Supreme Being appears throughout His Writings to have been ever uppermost in his Thoughts: a Subject, which, though often excellently handled, and made as Evident as any Arguments and Illustrations *à Posteriori* could make it; yet had never, I think, before his Time, been attempted in the Way of *strict Demonstration à Priori*: which certainly is the Strongest, and therefore, the most desirable of *All* Proofs, where it can be had. He undertook the Task: and Many of the Best Judges, after a great deal of Consideration, have allowed that He has executed it in a Masterly and Satisfactory Manner: with so much Evidence indeed, as generally to convince Those who are capable of entring into this sort of Questions. I say, *Generally*; because I am sensible, There are some very Understanding Persons who do not yet see this *Evidence* so clearly as Others do.

IN *Morality*, It was His Great and Principal View to do lasting service to the Eternal Obligations of *Virtue*; that is, of Every Instance of Practice and Conduct towards GOD, our Neighbour, and Our Selves, which results from the Nature and Relations

lations of Things: and this He has done in the plainest and most intelligible Manner.

IN the Cause of *Christianity* He labour'd as sincerely; and, with the same Clearness and Strength, produced and illustrated All the *Evidences* peculiar to It: not indeed, considering It, as it has been taught in the Schools or Discourses of Modern Ages; but as it lies in the *New Testament* itself.

AND throughout All this, As his *First Principle* was the *Unity* of GOD, which He esteemed the Only Guard against *Idolatry*, as well as the *Basis* of All Moral Obedience; so, next to This, Nothing Seem'd to be more strong within Him, than his Inclination to Settle the True Notions of *Necessity* and *Liberty* in what is called *Action*. This He has done in a very convincing Manner; and at the same time demonstrated, beyond all reasonable doubt, That Freedom of *Action* in *Man*, which only can make Him at all *Accountable* to his *Creator*, as a Judge of his Behaviour. Such was the Course He ran, in the Cause of That Religion, which alone can be styled worthy of GOD to propose, or of *Man* to embrace!

IN *Natural Philosophy*, and the *Mathematical* Knowledge necessary to It, amidst All his other Employments, He excelled, as if These had been his *Darling Study*. Not that He could possibly find Time Himself to make all the proper *Experiments*, or necessary *Calculations*. But He had I know not what happiness of Genius, by which he immediately comprehended what cost Others a great deal of Pains; and such a Faculty of judging of any *New Systems*, or *Propositions*, from what He knew certainly before; and these supported by a *Memory* which hardly ever failed Him upon these Subjects; That He was esteemed, by the *Knowers*, to be One of the Best Judges, to apply to, for a Quick Determination about the Force or Failure of any Arguments, or appearing Demonstrations, in these Studies.

His *Critical* Skill in the learned Languages was like the Gift of Nature; so strong and so easy in Him, that it appeared plainly, to what a Wide Extent This would have gone, had not his Other Affairs and Studies put a necessary Stop to what He was so exquisitely framed for.

Great as the Impediments were; We See, His *Memory* and his Judgment in this part of Learning were so Strong and Powerful, that They shone through them all in a few Instances; and these, sufficient to make All Men of Letters wish that He could have spent more of his Time this way. It is for his honour to observe That he made this Critical Skill subser-vient to the *Cause of Religion*, as well as *Polite Learning*; and gave a Noble Specimen of applying it to the disco-very of the True Meaning of Words and Phrases used in the *Sacred Writings*: without which, We do but wander in the dark, when We pretend to speak up-on many of the *Subjects* contained in those Books.

As much as I have said already of his Excellencies in Learning; There is still *One* behind, which was (I had almost said) strictly peculiar to Him: I mean The Manner of his handling Subjects of a *Metaphysical* and *Abstract* Nature. In this Skill, He had a Superiority so visible; that, I think, the Greatest Masters of it ought to yield it up to Him. This Su-periority appeared by his shewing that He had always clear and distinct Ideas; by

clothing them with plain and Intelligible Words; by going no farther than these *Ideas* and *Words* could go together; and by arguing as closely upon the abstrusest Points which He pretended to understand, as is usual in *Mathematical* Deductions themselves.

IF in *Any One* of these Many Branches of *Knowledge* and *Learning* He had excelled only so much, as He did in *All*; This alone would have justly intitled Him to the Name of a *Great Man*. But there is something so very extraordinary, that the same Person should excel, not only in those Parts of *Knowledge* which require the Strongest *Judgment*, but in Those which want the help of the Strongest *Memory* also; and It is so seldom Seen, That One, who is a Great Master in *Theology*, is at the same time skilfully fond of all *Critical* and *Classical* Learning; or Excellent in the *Physical* and *Mathematical* Studies; or well framed for *Metaphysical* and *Abstract* Reasonings: That it ought to be remarked, in how particular a Manner; and to how high a degree, *Divinity* and *Mathematics*, *Experimental Philosophy* and *Classical Learning*, *Metaphysics* and *Critical Skill*, All of them, (Various and different

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different as They are amongst Themselves,) united in Dr. *Clarke*.

THIS way of speaking of Him, with regard to All these, may Sound so high; that Many perhaps who were Strangers to Him, and to His Real Excellencies, may think, I have said too much. But I am confident, (and this is my Satisfaction) That In All that I have said upon these Subjects, I have the Consent and Testimony of Many of the most Judicious and Learned Men, of All Denominations amongst Us; as well Those who did not come into All his Sentiments, as Those who did.

HIS *Preaching* was what One would naturally expect from a Person of so Critical a *Genius*, and so sedate a *Judgment*. The Design and Tendency of it was not to move the Passions: nor had He any *Talent* this way. He wisely never attempted it, because He was sensible He should not succeed if He did. And if This was a *Defect*; it was a *Defect* in his original Frame and Constitution. But then, His Sentiments and Expression were so masterly; His way of explaining the *Phraseology* of *Scripture*, by collect-

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ing, and comparing together, all the Parallel Places truly relating to any Subject, was so Extraordinary and Convincing; that such a Delight of Satisfaction went along with it, as more than made amends for the Want of the *Other*. And in this Method of Preaching, He was so universally acceptable, that perhaps there was not a *Parishioner* He had, of any Rank, (whatever might be his way of thinking in our divided World,) who was not always pleased at his coming into the Pulpit; or, who was ever weary of his Instructions from thence. *However We differ in Some matters, We desire to See No other Person in the Pulpit*; was, I know, a Saying amongst Them. And it is for their honour, that I mention it.

THESE Accomplishments of *Nature* and *Learning* not only made his *Preaching* thus Excellent; but render'd his *Conversation* amongst his Friends in so high a degree Useful and Instructive, that It might be styled An Easy Continuation of his own Studies, and a School of Knowledge to Those who partook of it. Indeed, If I might be allowed to judge in What that peculiar Excellence lay, which

which most distinguished Him from other Great Men; I would place it in That Readiness of Thought, and Clearness of Expression, which hardly ever fail'd Him, when His Opinion was asked, upon All sorts of Important and Trying Questions. The Pleasure and Satisfaction which appeared where He conversed with any Freedom, could not but be very great; to hear Many of the Difficulties which had perplexed very Able Men in their several Professions and Studies, though started all on a sudden, vanishing almost as suddenly; lessening continually as fast as He spake, and generally ending with his Discourse. *Here* indeed, it was That He triumph'd without a Rival. They who fancied Themselves in Doubts never to be satisfied, often found Light from Him, after having vainly tried to find it elsewhere: and They who did not see to the End of their Difficulties immediately, yet had This Comfort, That They always understood Him, as far as He went; and at least that Satisfaction which is the next to finding out the Whole Truth, I mean The Satisfaction of being convinced that it was in vain to Expect it. Those who

knew Him, have been daily Witnesses to what I now say, in *Mathematical* and *Critical*, as well as *Theological* and *Metaphysical* Subjects: Upon the last of which indeed, He was One of the *very Few*, who could, or would, always talk intelligibly. His Discourse of this sort was without one Word or Term, which He was not as ready to give a plain Sense to, as He was to make use of it; and in a Style which He would take as great a pleasure to adapt to the Understanding of All Persons of Sense, as Many would do, to raise their Language even out of their own reach, as well as That of Others. For He judged That, as the Use of Language was to express Thoughts; so *Those sounds* could not be justly called *Language*, which represented No Thoughts at all. Such was his *Conversation* amongst his Friends: always far removed from *Pedantry*; and never arising from his own *affectation* of introducing *Learning* into it; but from the Enquiries of *Others*, or the *Occasions* which naturally and unavoidably led to it.

WHAT added a Force to his *Preaching*, and *Instructive Discourse*, was his own Un-
blameable

blameable Example, and Personal Conduct, in All the Duties of a Man, and a Christian. His Piety was Manly and Unaffected; built upon the most solid Grounds, and free from all Pomp and Shew. The *Charity* of his Temper and Good-will was as Extensive as the Whole Rational Creation of God. The *Charity* of his Assistance and Beneficence, as Extensive as the Circumstances of his Family would prudently admitt. His Love of the Religious and Civil Liberties of Mankind, was a Ruling and Powerful Principle in His Heart and Practice. In a word, His Morals, from the first of his Days, to the last, were without Reproach. There was an Innocence and Inoffensiveness remarkable thro' his whole Behaviour: And his *Life*, when He came into the View of the Great World, was an Ornament and Strength to that Religion which his *Pen* so well defended.

No wonder that a Person of such a *Genius*, and such *Acquirements*, was sought after by the Greatest Lovers of Virtue and Knowledge. This was his Case, to such a Degree, that, thro' his last Years, He could command but very little time for his own Studies,

Studies, even in the *Morning*; and after the *Morning* was over, He was almost Every day invited and press'd amongst his Friends abroad; not only Those of his own Parish, who were equally desirous of his Company; but Many in all the other parts of the Town.

THE *Chief Persons* of the *Law* will forgive Me, if I can't pass over the Singular Regard They paid to this Great Man: which was so remarkable, that it seem'd to be a sort of Contest amongst Them, who should shew it most. The *Lord High Chancellor*, The *Master of the Rolls*, The *Lord Chief Baron*, and several of his Brethren the Learned *Judges*, (not to mention *Others*) will, I am confident, esteem it their Honour to have it said, since it can be said with Truth, That there never yet appear'd a Divine amongst Us, (not related to *Them* by his Office,) who received such continued and such particular Marks of the highest Respect from so many Ornaments of that *Honourable Profession*, as He did, from the Day of his being first known amongst Them, to That day, on which Some of Them were Witnesses to the approaches of his last Illness.

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THE Regards paid to Him by the Best of the Powerfull and Noble part of Our World, were as Constant and as Remarkable. Above all, It ought ever to be remember'd, wherever the Name of Dr *Clarke* is remember'd, That her Present *MAYESTY*, from Her first Acquaintance with his Character to the Day of his Death, express'd the high Esteem She had of His Comprehensive Capacity, and Usefull Learning, by very frequent Conversations with Him, upon Many of the most Important and Entertaining Points of True Philosophy, and Real Knowledge. And seldom a Week pass'd in which SHE did not with pleasure receive some proof of the Greatness of his Genius, and of the Force of his Superior Understanding.

IF Any One should ask, as it is natural to do, How it came to pass that this Great Man was never rais'd higher in the *Church*? I must answer, That it was neither for want of Merit, nor Interest, nor the Favor of Some in whose Power it was to have rais'd Him. But He had *Reasons* within his own Breast, which hinder'd Him either from seeking after, or accept-
ing

ing any such Promotion. Of These He was the proper, and indeed the only Judge: and therefore I say no more of Them. He was happy in that Station, in which it had pleased GOD to fix Him before Those *Reasons* took place: and He had not in Him, either the Desire of Dignity, or Love of Riches, strong enough to make Him uneasy for Any thing more than what afforded Him and his Family a Decent appearance and place in Life.

T H U S adorned with the most Valuable of All Moral and Intellectual Accomplishments, He lived in the Esteem of the Wise and Good and Great; and died sincerely lamented by Every Friend to Learning, Truth, and Virtue.

I HAVE thus paid that last Duty to the Memory of this Excellent Man, which I could not but esteem a Debt to such a Benefactor to the Cause of *Religion* and *Learning* united. And, as These WORKS of His must last as long as Any Language remains to convey them to future times; perhaps I may flatter Myself That this Faint and Imperfect Account of Him may be transmitted down with Them.

And

And I hope, It will be thought a pardonable piece of Ambition, and Self-Interest-
edness; if, being fearfull lest Every Thing
else should prove too weak to keep the
Remembrance of Myself in being, I lay
hold on *His* Fame, to prop and support
My own. I am sure, As I have little
Reason to expect that Any thing of mine,
without such an Assistance, can live: I
shall think Myself greatly recompensed
for the want of Any other Memorial, if
My Name may go down to Posterity
thus closely joyned to *His*; and I myself
be thought of, and spoke of, in Ages to
come, under the Character of *The*
FRIEND of Dr *CLARKE*.

BENJ. SARUM.



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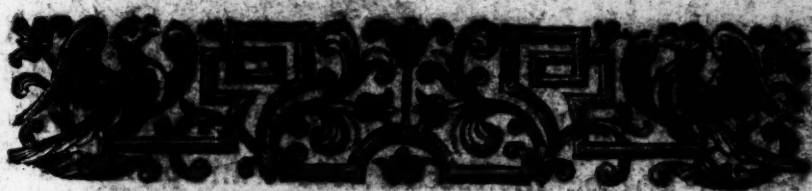
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 that he should commit iniquity: For the
 Work of a Man shall he render unto him,
 and cause every Man to find according to
 his Ways: Yea, surely God will not do
 wickedly, neither will the Almighty per-
 vert Judgment.* 369. 393

SERMON



S E R M O N I.

Of FAITH in GOD.



H E B. xi. 6.

But without Faith, it is impossible to please him: For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.



THE foregoing Chapter is a very S E R M. earnest and affectionate Exhortation to the Duty of Faith. I.

Ver. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith. Ver. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering. Ver. 37. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry: Now the just shall

SERM. *live by Faith.* That This exhortation
 I. might not be ineffectual, for want of men's
 clearly understanding *What the Nature of*
 the Duty was, to which they were here so
 earnestly exhorted; the Apostle in the 1st
 verse of This chapter, proceeds to define
 distinctly *what Faith is, and wherein it con-*
sists. *Faith, saith he, is the substance of*
things hoped for, (in the original it is, *the*
firm and assured expectation of things hoped
for,) *the evidence of things not seen.* And
what those Things are, which being not seen
by Sense, are yet made manifest by Faith,
 he declares in the words of the Text, They
 are, saith he, the *Being of God, and the Re-*
wards of the Life to come. *He that cometh*
to God, must believe that he is, and that he is
a Rewarder of them that diligently seek
him There has prevailed in modern times,
 a very different and enthusiastick Notion
 of *Faith*; as if Faith, under the Gospel,
 was nothing but a Confident Reliance
 upon the Merits of Christ, to do
 all That for us, which he on the contrary
 expressly requires that we should do for our-
 selves. When we have heartily indeavour-
 ed to obey the commandments of God; and
 have performed our Duty really and sincere-
 ly,

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3

ly, tho' very imperfectly; to rely *Then* up-^{S E R M.}
on the Merits and Intercession of Christ,^{I.}
for the acceptance of those imperfect tho' 
sincere Endeavours; This is indeed the *Du-*
ty, and the *Comfort* of a Christian; but it is
not what the Scripture usually calls *Faith*.
Faith, is that firm Belief of things at pre-
sent not seen; that conviction upon the
Mind, of the Truth of the Promises and
Threatnings of God made known in the
Gospel; of the certain reality of the Re-
wards and Punishments of the Life to come;
which inables a man, in opposition to all the
Temptations of a corrupt World, to obey
God in expectation of an invisible Reward
hereafter. This is that *Faith*, which in
Scripture is always represented as a *moral*
Virtue, nay as the *principal* moral *Virtue*,
and the *root and spring* of all other *Virtues*;
Because it is an Act, not of the *Understand-*
ing only, but also and chiefly of the *Will*, so
to consider impartially, to approve and em-
brace the Doctrine of the Gospel, as to
make it the great Rule of our Life and Act-
ions. By *This Faith* it is, that *We* must be
justified; and by *This* it is, that the *Antients*
whose example is celebrated in this 11th chap-
ter, *obtained*, as the Apostle expresses it, a

SER M. *good Report.* The Faith of *Abraham* was,
 I. that *he looked for a City which hath founda-*
 tions, even the heavenly Jerusalem spoken of
 in the Prophecies, *whose Builder and Maker*
is God, ver. 10. The Faith of the other Pa-
 triarchs was that *confessing themselves stran-*
gers and pilgrims on the Earth, they declared
 plainly that they *sought a better Country*,
 that is, *an heavenly*, ver. 13, 16. The Faith
 of *Moses* was, that he *chose rather to suffer*
affliction with the people of God, than to en-
joy the pleasures of Sin for a season; For he
had respect unto the recompense of Reward;
 and *endured*, as *seeing Him who is invisible*,
 ver. 25, 26, 27. The Faith of the *Martyrs*
 was that they *chose to be tortured*, not *accept-*
ing deliverance, that they might obtain a *bet-*
ter Resurrection, ver. 35. This is a very easy
 and intelligible Notion of *Faith*; and such
 a Notion, as shows plainly, how Faith is not
 a mere speculative Act of the Understanding,
 but a substantial practical moral Virtue.

'Tis true; This is not indeed the *only*
 Sense of the word, *Faith*, in Scripture;
 but 'tis the *Principal* and most *important*
 sense of it. As may appear by considering,
 that all the Variety of significations, in
 which the word is used in different places
 of

Of FAITH in GOD.

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of Scripture, may properly be reduced, for S E R M
memory and distinctness sake, to these I
which follow. 1st, The word, *Faith*, in
some places signifies That earnest Trust and
Confidence in the Power of God, to which
in the Apostles Times was annexed the
Gift of working Miracles. Thus *Mat. xvii.*
20. If ye have Faith (says our Lord to his
Apostles) *as a grain of mustard-seed*; (if ye
have That Trust in God, That particular
Kind of Faith or Dependence on him, That
assured Reliance on his Power without
Doubt or wavering, required of you peculi-
arly at *This time*; if you have *This Faith*,
though ever so small in comparison, answer-
able in any measure to your present Office
and Advantages;) *ye shall say to this moun-*
tain, remove hence to yonder place, and it
shall remove. This, was a Faith required
of the Apostles at *That particular Time*,
and of *Them only*. 2^{dly}, In other passages,
the word, *Faith*, signifies the duty of Veraci-
ty, Faithfulness, or Truth. Thus *Mat. xxiii.*
23. Ye have omitted the weightier matters of
the Law; judgment, mercy, and Faith; Faith,
that is, *Fidelity, Truth, or Faithfulness,*
in the discharge of any Trust reposed in
Men. Analogous to which, it is also some-

S E R M. times used for the *Trust* itself, or the *thing*
 I. committed to our charge; Thus *Rom. xii. 6.*
 *Having then Gifts differing according to the*
Grace that is given to us; whether prophecy,
let us prophesy according to the proportion of
Faith; Or Ministry, let us wait on our mi-
nistring; [The phrase in our modern lan-
guage is very difficult, and cannot well be
understood without This observation:] Ac-
ording to the proportion of Faith, that is, ac-
ording to the nature and degree of the Gift
or the Trust reposed in us, (whether it be pro-
phesy or ministration or any other Office which
requires Faithfulness in the performance of
it,) so let every one of us discharge his re-
spective Duty. 3dly, Another and much
more usual signification of the word, Faith;
is to denote the whole Gospel of Christ, or
the Christian religion, in opposition to the
ritual Works of the Law of Moses. Thus
Acts vi. 7. The number of the Disciples mul-
tiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great
company of the Priests were obedient to the
Faith; that is, embraced the Gospel. Again,
Rom. iii. 28. A man is justified by Faith,
without the deeds of the Law; by Faith,
that is, by the conditions of the Gospel. And
Rom. x. 8. The word of Faith, which we
preach;

Of FAITH in GOD.

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preach; That is to say, the Doctrine of the S E R M.
Gospel. And indeed *generally* throughout all I.
the *Epistles*, and in the Book of the *Acts*, 
this is the constant signification of the
word, *Faith*. And the reason *why* the
whole *Gospel* is so often expressed by
that Name, is very obvious; [namely] be-
cause the great Motives and Promises of
the Gospel, are *the invisible things of a Fu-
ture State*, which can be discerned by *Faith*
only. *4thly* and *Lastly*, in *other* places of
Scripture, the word, *Faith*, signifies plainly
and literally and in its most natural Sense,
a firm Belief and Perswasion; a firm Be-
lief, of the *Being*, and *Attributes*, and
Promises of God. Not, (as *Some* under-
stand it,) a confident *Credulity* in they
know not *what*, in whatever their Teach-
ers require them to believe; and *That* per-
haps with so much the greater Assurance,
as the things are more absurd and unrea-
sonable to be believed. Neither does *Faith*
signify, (as *Others* have contended,) a
groundless imaginary Assurance, and confi-
dent Reliance on our being unalterably, we
know not *why*, in the Favour of God.
But it is a rational Perswasion and firm Be-
lief, of his Attributes discovered by Na-
ture,

SERMON, and of his Promises made known in
 the Gospel; so as thereby to govern and direct our lives. Thus the word is used in the 1st verse of this chapter, *Faith is the Substance (a Substantial well-grounded expectation) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* And in the words of the Text; *Without Faith it is impossible to please God; For He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

To come to God, signifies, according to the Nature of the Jewish language, *making Profession of Religion*; undertaking to live a holy and virtuous Life, in obedience to God's commands, and in expectation of his Rewards. And it answers to another phrase of the like import, *walking with God*; which signifies *continuing and persevering* in that religious practice, whereof *coming to God* is the *Beginning or Entrance*. Thus Gen. v. 22. *Enoch walked with God*; and, vi. 9. *Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God.* *Walking with God*, is being *perfect or steadfast* in that religious course of Life, whereof *Coming to God*, is making the *first Profession*. He that cometh to God,

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is as much as to say, *whoſoever will be a* SERM.
virtuous or religious man: In like manner,
as, he that cometh to Christ, ſignifies more
particularly, *he that will take upon him to*
be a Chriſtian. No man can come to
Me, ſays our Saviour, *Joh. vi. 44.* (that
is, he cannot become a good Chriſtian,) *ex-*
cept the Father which hath ſent me, draw
him; — Every man that hath learned of
the Father, cometh unto Me. The phraſe,
except the Father draw him, is in our pre-
ſent manner of ſpeaking, difficult and unu-
ſual; But it is explained by what follows,
He that hath learned of the Father. The
Meaning is: No man can effectually believe
in *Chriſt*, except he firſt believes in *God*.
Natural Religion, is the beſt Preparative
for the reception of the *Chriſtian*. The
Love of Truth and *Virtue in general*, is the
Dispensation of the *Father*; And the Do-
ctrine of the *Gospel in particular*, is the
Dispensation of the *Son*. Now as no man
can receive *Chriſt*, who has not firſt heard,
and is thus drawn by the *Father*; as no one
can be a good *Chriſtian*, who is not firſt re-
ſolved to be a good *Man*; ſo no one can
hear the *Father*, can come to *God*, unleſs he
firſt have *Faith*, and believes in Him. The
Dispen-

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S E R M. Dispensation of the *Father*, That of Creation or Natural Religion, is a necessary Preparative for the Dispensation of the *Son*, that is, for the Gospel : And it must *itself* have *preparation made for it by Faith going before*, as by the *First Foundation of all*. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

THE Sense therefore of the Text is This. 'Tis in vain to make Profession of Religion, without being first well instructed and firmly perswaded of *This Foundation ; the Being and Attributes of God*. There is no *Christian*, who is not well apprized of This ; and may be apt to think perhaps, that 'tis needless to remind him of it. But there are few who consider these first Principles of Religion, so *seriously* and so *frequently* as they ought to do ; and in *such a manner*, as to cause them to produce their proper Effect, by influencing their whole Lives and Conversations. For *Knowledge* is but a dormant Habit, if not excited by constant Meditation ; and *Powers* are of no Use, if not produced into *Act*. Right Notions of the Being and Attributes of God, every one knows are the Foundation of

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of all Religion: But then This Knowledge SERM.
I.
must not be a bare Speculation; but a serious, practical, affecting impression, and deep Sense upon the Mind; of a Supreme Being, who created the World by his Power, preserves and governs it by his Goodness and Wisdom, and will judge it with Justice, Mercy, and Truth: Of *such* a Supreme Being; whose Glory, no Eye can behold; whose Majesty, no Thought can comprehend; whose Power, no Strength can resist; from whose Presence, no Swift-ness can flee; from whose Knowledge, no Secret can be concealed; whose Justice, no Art can evade; whose Goodness, every Creature partakes of. This is That *Faith*, without which it is *impossible to please God*. It is *impossible* to please him without it; not that Virtue and Righteousness, if it were possible to find them *without* Faith, could be in themselves unacceptable to God; but that, because *without* such Faith there *can be no* Righteousness, therefore neither without it can God possibly be pleased. *Righteousness* is the only means, by which rational Beings can obtain the Favour of God; And therefore since *Faith* is necessary in order to Righteousness, 'tis consequently

S E R M. *frequently* necessary to the obtaining of the
 I. Favour of God. He that will *please* God,
 must *come to him* in the Ways of Virtue
 and true Holiness; and he that *cometh to*
 God, must first *believe that he is*.

FROM what has been said upon This
 head, we may easily dissipate the vain
 Fears of many pious and sincere persons,
 who are very apt to be suspicious of them-
 selves that they want true *Faith*, and con-
 sequently that their Religion is vain. Now
 this Fear, in such Persons, evidently arises
 from want of having a distinct Notion
 what *Faith* is. They are possessed of the
Thing; but for want of clearly understand-
 ing the *Notion*, they are not able to judge
 rightly whether they have it or not. From
 the explication which has Now been given
 of that Matter, men may easily examine
 themselves, whether they *have* that Faith,
 which I have been describing, or no. And
 without entring into the *definition* at all,
 there is yet a plainer Rule given us by our
 Saviour; by its *Fruits* we may know it.
 Where-ever the *Fruits* of Righteousness and
 true Virtue are found, *there* cannot be want-
 ing the *Root* of Faith, from which those
 Fruits proceed: For he that *cometh to God*,
 does

does certainly believe that he *is*; and gives SERM.
I.
the best Proof in the World that he does so. On the contrary, whosoever upon examination finds not in his Life the Fruits of Righteousness; whatsoever his *speculative* Understanding may be, yet in the *Christian* sense he may be sure he has no Faith. For if the Spring, the Cause, the active Principle were present; there would not be wanting its proper Effect. Such as the Root is, such *will be* the Branches. He who seriously *believes* that God is; *will* endeavour to come unto him, in the ways of Truth and Righteousness.

HAVING thus briefly explained the former part of the words; and shewn both *what* Faith is, and how absolutely *necessary*; as *without which* it is *impossible* to please God, or to come unto him; It remains that I consider, in the *latter* part of the words, those *Two* fundamental instances or primary *objects* of Faith, laid before us by the Apostle; namely, the *Being of God*, and his *Relation to Us*; that he *Is*, and that he is a *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. The first foundation of all, and the *primary* object of Faith, is the *Being of God*; *He that cometh to God, must believe that he Is*. Now the
Grounds

SER M. *Grounds or Arguments*, upon which our Faith
 I. in *This particular* is built; besides the Evi-
 dence and Authority of *Revelation*; are, from
Reason it self, and from the very *Nature of Things*, many and various: there being hardly any thing in Nature, from whence the Certainty of the Being of God, may not justly and reasonably be deduced. Some of the Arguments are abstruse, and require Attention; but, when thoroughly considered, conclude most strongly to the Conviction of obstinate Unbelievers. Others are plain, easy and obvious, suited to all Capacities; always ready at hand to confirm the Faith even of the meanest Understandings; and yet differing from the former, not in *strength*, but in being more *common only*. It would be tedious to repeat at length upon This Head a great Number of Arguments, among Christians to whom they have been so often urged, and are so well understood. But by a brief recapitulation, to remind our selves frequently of things already known, for the better assisting of our meditations; cannot but in many cases be very useful. For *me*, saith St. Paul, to repeat unto you the *same things*, is not grievous, and for *You* it is safe. To this purpose, the numerous Arguments, which
 prove

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prove (in particular) *the Being of God*, may be naturally reduced to the *Two* which follow. SERM.
I.

First, THAT 'tis evident, both We our selves, and all the other Beings we know in the World, are weak and dependent Creatures; which neither gave our selves Being, nor can preserve it by any Power of our own: And that therefore we entirely owe our Being to some Superiour and more Powerful Cause; which Superiour Cause, either must be it self the *first Cause*, which is the Notion of *God*; or else, by the same Argument as before, must derive *from* him, and so lead us to the Knowledge *of* him. If it be said, that we received our Being from our Fore-Fathers by a continued natural Succession, (which however would not in any step have been possible, without a perpetual Providence;) yet still the Argument holds no less strong concerning the *First* of the whole Race; that *He* could not but be made by a Superiour Intelligent Cause. If an Atheist, contrary to the Truth of all History, shall contend that there may have been, without any Beginning at all, an *eternal* Succession of Men; yet still it will be no less evident, that such a perpetual Succession could not have

S E R M. have been without an eternal Superior Cause; because in the Nature of Things themselves, there is manifestly no *Necessity*, that any such Succession of transient Beings, either temporary or perpetual, should have existed at all.

Secondly, T H E other Argument, to which the greatest part of the Proofs of the Being of God may briefly be reduced, is the *Order* and *Beauty* of the World; That exquisite Harmony of Nature, by which (as St. Paul expresses it, *Rom. i. 20.*) *the invisible things of God from the creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.* And This Argument, as it is infinitely strong to the most accurate Philosophers, so it is also sufficiently obvious even to the meanest Capacities. *Whose*
 Pl. civ. 2. Power was it, that framed this beautiful and stately Fabrick, this immense and spacious World? *that stretched out the North over the empty place, and hanged the Earth upon nothing?* Job xxvi. 7. That formed those vast and numberless Orbs of Heaven, and disposed them into such regular and uniform
 Pl. xix. 1. Pl. cvii. 4. Pl. civ. 19. Motions? that appointed the Sun to rule the day, and the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night? that so adjusted their several

veral distances, as that they should neither S E R M.
 be scorched by Heat, nor destroyed by cold? I.
 that encompassed the Earth with *Air* so
 wonderfully contrived, as at one and the same
 time to support Clouds for rain, to afford
 Winds for Health and Traffick, to be pro-
 per for the Breath of Animals by its Spring,
 for causing Sounds by its Motion, for
 transmitting Light by its transparency?
 that fitted the Water to afford Vapours for
 Rain, Speed for Traffick, and Fish for nou-
 rishment and delicacy? that weighed the
 Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ba-
 lance; and adjusted them in their most pro-
 per places for Fruitfulness and Health?
 that diversified the Climates of the Earth
 into such an agreeable Variety, that in that
 great Difference, yet each one has its pro-
 per Seasons, Day and Night, Winter and
 Summer? that clothed the Face of the
 Earth with Plants and Flowers, so exqui-
 sitely adorned with various and inimitable
 Beauties, that even *Solomon* in all his glory
 was not arrayed like one of them? that re-
 plenished the World with Animals, so *dis-*
ferent from each other in *particular*, and
 yet All in the *whole* so much *alike*? that
 framed with exquisite workmanship the

SERM. Eye for Seeing, and other parts of the Body, necessarily in proportion; without which, no Creature could have long subsisted? that beyond all these things, indued the *Soul of Man* with far superiour Faculties; with Understanding, Judgment, Reason and Will; with Faculties whereby in a most exalted manner *God teaches us more than the Beasts of the Field, and maketh us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven.* Job xxxv. 11?

'Tis commonly alleged by Unbelievers, that all these things are done by *Second Causes*. And suppose they *were*, (which however is not universally true: But suppose they *were* effected by Second causes,) yet *How* would *That* diminish the Necessity of acknowledging the *First Cause*? If among *Men*, many things are performed by the Use of *Instruments*; are those things therefore ever the less justly ascribed to the *Hands* which *used* the Instruments? Because every Wheel in a *Watch* moves only *naturally*, according to the Frame of its parts, and the Strength which the Spring impresses upon it; is therefore the Skill of the Workman the less to be acknowledged, who adjusted those very things? Or because 'tis *natural* for the Wheels of a Watch, or
for

for the Rooms of a House, to be of such particular Shapes and Dimensions, does This make it possible, that therefore they may have been formed so without any Artificer ?

All *Natural*, All *Second* Causes, are nothing else, but either the *inanimate* Motions of senseless Matter, or the *voluntary* Motions of dependent Creatures. And What are these, but *One* of them the direct Operation ; and the *Other*, only the free Permission, of Him who ruleth over all ? Mens neglecting therefore to infer the Being of God, from every thing they see or think of every day, is in reality as great a stupidity as if from the constant and regular continuance of the *day-light*, men should cease to observe, that there is such a thing as the *Sun* in the Heavens, from whence That Light proceeds. Nor would it be more absurd to imagine, that the Light would continue, though the Sun, which causes it, were extinguished ; then that the Effects of Nature can regularly go on, without the Being of God who causes those Effects. To evade this Argument there is no other possible way, but to affirm either that all things were produced by *Chance*, or that they are all *Eternal necessarily of themselves*.

S E R M. *selves.* As to *Chance*, 'tis evident That is
 I. nothing but a *mere Word*, or an *abstract No-*
 tion in our manner of conceiving things.
 It has itself no real Being; it is Nothing,
 and can *do* nothing. Besides, in the works
 of *God*, the *further* men search, and the
 more discoveries they make, the *greater ex-*
actness they constantly find; whereas in
 things done either by the Art of *Man*, or by
 what we call *Chance*, the *contrary* always is
 true; the *more* they are understood, the
less accurate they appear. Beyond all cre-
 dulity therefore is the creduloufness of A-
 theists, whose Belief is so absurdly strong,
 as to believe that *Chance* could make the
World, when it cannot build a *House*; that
Chance should produce all *Plants*, when it
 cannot paint one *Landskip*; that *Chance*
 should form All *Animals*, when it cannot
 so much as make a *lifeless Watch*. On the
 other hand therefore, if they will affirm
 that all things are *eternal*; yet still the Ar-
 gument holds as strong as before, that
 things which cannot for any *time* exist with-
 out a cause, can much less without a cause
 exist through all *time*. Unless they will af-
 firm, that All things exist by an internal *ab-*
solute Necessity in their own Nature. Which
 that

that they do *not*, is evident from hence; S E R M.
 that there exists in the World an infinite I.
 Diversity of Things, whereas *Necessity* is 
uniform and without Variation.

HAVING thus briefly shown that God *Is*;
 it will easily follow in the *next* place, that
 he *is* and must be a Rewarder of *them that*
diligently seek them. For he that governs
 the Motions of every even the smallest par-
 ticle of *lifeless Matter*, and by whose Pro-
 vidence every *Vegetable* and every the mean-
 est *Animal* is perpetually preserved; with-
 out whom, not a *Sparrow* falls to the
 ground; and with whom, even the very
hairs of our head are all numbred; shall he
 not much more take care of *Us*, O We of
 little Faith? Now the proper and princi-
 pal Care or Government over *Rational*
 Creatures, is the *Rewarding* or *Punishing*
 them according to their respective Deserts.
 If therefore God *Is*, (as hath before been
 proved,) and is Governour of the World;
 it follows that he must be also, (Since
 therein principally all Government con-
 sists; he must be) a Rewarder of *them that*
diligently seek him.

S E R M. THE Application of what has been said,
 I. is briefly, 1st to Scepticks, and 2^{dly} to Be-
 lievers.

1st. TO such as are Scepticks or Unbelievers of the Being of God, 'tis adviseable in the first place, that they consider how *uncomfortable* their Opinion is. 'Tis plain, such is the condition of human Nature in This Life, that we are continually surrounded with *Evils* which we cannot *prevent*, with *Wants* which we are not able to *supply*, with *Infirmities* which we cannot *remove*, with *Dangers* which we can no way *escape*. Our *injoyments* are such, as are *not* for one moment *secure*; our *expectations*, of such things as are *not in our own Power to accomplish*. We are apt to *grieve*, for things we *cannot help*; and to be *tormented* with *Fears*, of what we *cannot prevent*. And in all these cases, there is no substantial Comfort, but in the Belief of God; and in the singular Satisfaction of having Him our Friend. Had the thing therefore really in itself any *uncertainty*, (which is by no means the case,) yet it could not but be what every wise and reasonable man must *desire* and *wish* might be true, that the World were governed by a wise and just
 and

Quid ha-
 bet ea res
 lætabile
 aut glori-
 sum?

and merciful God. So that even *Scepticks* S E R M.
themselves cannot but be self-condemned, 
 when they *mock* and *scoff* at Religion;
 when they refuse to hear Arguments for the
 Truth of the most desirable thing in the
 World; and will not examine those Evi-
 dences and Proofs of Religion, which are
 really much stronger than these persons can
 before-hand imagine. And if the Proofs
 were much *weaker* than they are, yet they
 would deserve at least to be seriously *consi-*
dered; because the hazard on one side is
 infinitely great, if Religion which they re-
 ject, be true; whereas on the other side
 there is no hazard at all, if, being receiv-
 ed as true, it could possibly prove to be a
 mistake.

2dly. To sincere Believers, the Use of
 what has been said, is; that being once sa-
 tisfied in the *main and great* Truths of Re-
 ligion, they suffer not themselves to be
 moved, and their Faith in this *Great*
 point, shaken, by nice and uncertain dis-
 putes about particular Questions of less
 moment. For, which way soever many
 such controversies of an abstruse and diffi-
 cult nature, be determined; yet the great

SERM. Foundation of Religion, upon which a

I. Wise Man may always act steddily, is laid
deep and sure in this plain Proposition,
that *God Is, and that he is a Rewarder of
them that diligently seek him.*



SERM-



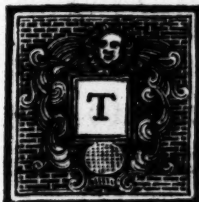
S E R M O N II.

Of the UNITY of GOD.



MATT. iv. 10. latter part.

*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,
and Him only shalt thou serve.*



H E Practice of True Religion, S E R M.
consists principally in Two II.

Great Branches; giving Honour
to God, and doing Good to

*Men. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and
with all thy Mind; This (says our Saviour)
is the first and great Commandment: And
the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love
thy Neighbour as thy self. Under this Se-
cond Branch, the Duty of Loving our
Neighbour or Doing Good to Men; are
compre-*

S E R M. comprehended likewise those Duties which
 II. more particularly respect mens *Selves*, such
 as are *Sobriety, Temperance, Humility*, and
 the like. The *former* Branch, the Duty of
loving God with our whole Heart, is by our
 Saviour expressed in *Other* words in the
Text now read unto you, *Thou shalt wor-*
ship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt
thou serve. In discoursing upon which im-
 portant Words, I shall observe the follow-
 ing Method. 1st, I shall consider the *Sup-*
position laid down in the *Text*; that there
 is *One*, and *One Only*, True God or Supreme
Lord of all things; *The Lord thy God.*
 2^{dly}, I shall shew *What* That *Duty* towards
 him is, which is expressed in *these* words,
Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. And
 3^{dly}, it being added, *Him Only shalt thou*
serve; I shall thence take occasion to ex-
 plain distinctly, the nature of the several
 Species of *Idolatry*: Which consists, ei-
 ther in setting up *Idol-Gods*, in opposition
 to, or in conjunction with, the True God;
 or in worshipping the *True God himself*, af-
 ter an *idolatrous manner*; either represent-
 ing him under visible and corporeal *Images*,
 or applying to him through false and *Idol-*
Mediators, in diminution of the Honour of
 the

Of the UNITY of GOD.

27

the One True Mediator, whom God himself has expressly appointed to be Alone our Advocate, Intercessor, and Judge. The

S E R M.
II.


I. 1st. THING to be observed, is the *Supposition* laid down in the Text; that there is One, and One Only, True God or Supreme Lord of all things; *The Lord thy God. One God*: That is, One Eternal and Infinite, One Supreme and Independent, One All-powerful and All-wise, One perfectly Just and Merciful and Good Being. The God who created all things for his Own good pleasure, and on whose Will depends every Moment the continuance of their Being: *By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth, Ps. xxxiii. 6.* The God by whose Providence every thing is governed, so that *without him not a Sparrow falls to the ground, but even the very hairs of our head are all numbred, Matt. x. 29.* The God who *hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined the times before-appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, Acts xvii. 26.* The God who, in times past, particularly manifested himself to our Fathers, to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and*
the

S E R M. the Patriarchs: Who brought the *children*
 II. of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, with an high hand
 ~~~~~ and with an out-stretched Arm: Who delivered the *Law* to *Moses*: Who, in a Succession of Ages, instructed his people from time to time by the *Prophets*: and who, in these *last days*, hath *spoken unto us by his Son*. According to That declaration of *St. Peter*; in his discourse to the *Jews*, *Acts* iii. 13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus*: And That of *St. Paul*, *2 Cor.* i. 3. *God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort*; and *ch.* xi. 31. *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is Blessed for evermore.*

THIS Doctrine, of the whole World being under the Government of *One God*, is the *Natural* Notion, which the Light of *Reason it self* has universally implanted in the Minds of Men. And had not persons of vain and conceited Imaginations, *professing themselves Wise, become Fools*: Had not men of corrupt Manners, *disliking to retain God in their Knowledge*, and having *their foolish heart darkened*; Deifying the Souls of  
 their



their *deceased* Kings, out of Flattery to the *Living*; filled the minds of the ignorant and deluded Vulgar, with a superstitious Belief of Many Gods having Rule over particular Places and Countries; The True Notion of God, so agreeable to the plain and natural Dictates of unprejudiced Reason, might well have been preserved among the Nations of the Earth. For the plain connexion, and dependence of one thing upon another, through the whole material Universe; through all parts of the Earth, and in the visible Heavens; The Disposition of the Air, and Sea, and Winds; The Motions of the Sun, and Moon, and Stars; and the useful Vicissitudes of Seasons, for the regular production of the various Fruits of the Earth; have always been sufficient to make it evidently appear even to *mean* Capacities, (had they not been perpetually prejudiced by wrong Instruction,) that all things are under the Direction of *One* Power, under the Dominion of *One* God, to whom the whole Universe is uniformly subject. And in fact, notwithstanding the strongest Prejudices of long-established Superstitions and enforced Idolatry, yet the *wisest and Best Men*, in All *heathen-nations*,  
have

S E R M. have ever seen and in good measure maintained this Great Truth; as a Testimony to a degenerate and corrupt World, that God never *left himself wholly without Witness*, notwithstanding all the provocations of Idolaters; but continually manifested himself to all reasonable Understandings, *in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our hearts with Food and Gladness.* But 'tis with greater Clearness from all appearance of Doubt, and with greater Assurance of *Authority* confirming the Dictate of Reason, that the *Scripture* sets forth to us This First Principle of religion. *Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is One Lord; [ch. iv. 39.] He is God in Heaven above, and upon the Earth beneath; there is none else.* Again, *Is. xliv. 6. I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God; [-----Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.]* And in the New Testament, *1 Cor. viii. 4. We know-----that there is none other God but One: For though there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth, (as there be Many Gods); yet to Us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and*

## Of the UNITY of GOD.

31

One Lord (that is, One Mediator,) *Jesus* S E R M.  
*Christ, by whom are all things, and we by* II.  
*Him.* This is the *First* thing I proposed to  
consider; The *Supposition* laid down in the  
Text, that there is *One*, and *One Only* True  
God or Supreme Lord of all things; *The*  
*Lord thy God.*

II. *2dly*; I AM to shew in the *next* place,  
*What That Duty* towards him is, which is  
expressed in *these* words, *Thou shalt worship*  
*the Lord thy God.* And here the word,  
*Worship*, must be understood in its largest  
Extent; to signify every religious, every  
virtuous Act or Habit, by which Regard is  
shown to God, either in the *Affections* of  
our *Mind*, or in the *Expressions* of our  
*Mouths*, or in the *Actions* of our *Life*.

*1st*, THE *Worship* of God, as it denotes  
That Regard we are to bear to him in the  
*Affections* of our *Minds*, implies, as the  
First Ground and Foundation of All, a firm  
belief of his *Being*: For *he that cometh to God*,  
*must first believe that he Is, and that he is a*  
*Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*  
That is: Our Belief of his Existence, must  
not be a Careless speculative acknowledg-  
ment of him, barely as a Being infinitely  
perfect in himself; but it must be a ra-  
tional,



SERM.

II.



tional, considerate, and practical persuasion, firmly impressed and fixed upon our Minds, of his being truly and literally the original Author, and the continual Preserver, Governour, Director and Ruler of the Universe, and of all things that are therein, by his immediate, real, Living, Active Presence, Authority and Dominion; in opposition to all sceptical Notions concerning blind *Chance*, or unintelligent *Fate*. From such a Belief as This, of the Being of God; there *will* arise just and worthy Notions of his Perfections and Attributes. And a just Sense, and due Consideration, of each of his Perfections respectively; *will* naturally excite in us That constant and proper Regard towards him in the correspondent Affections of our Mind, or That internal habitual Honour and Sense of Duty towards him, which, to Him who sees the Heart, is the most valuable and acceptable part of Worship. In *This* Sense therefore, the Worship, This internal Worship of God, includes the following particulars, and Others of the like nature. It implies our *fearing* his *Power*; so as to be much more solicitous not to offend *Him*, than to fall under the Displeasure of any *Other* Person

I

what-

whatsoever: According to That Admoni-  
tion of our Saviour, *Fear not them which*  
*kill the Body, and after That have no more*  
*that they can do; But I will forewarn you,*  
*whom ye shall fear; Fear Him, who, af-*  
*ter he has killed, hath power to cast into Hell;*  
*yea, I say unto you, Fear him.* It implies  
our revering and standing in awe of His  
Justice; who, as Moses describes him, is Deut. x:  
a Great God, mighty and terrible, which<sup>17.</sup>  
regardeth not persons, nor taketh Reward:  
or, as 'tis expressed in the book of Job,  
ch. xxxiv. 19. *He accepteth not the Per-*  
*sons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich*  
*more than the Poor; for they are All the*  
*work of His hands.* It implies, our Trust-  
ing and Relying upon his Faithfulness  
and Veracity, in all cases of Difficulty  
and Distress whatsoever; that, how lit-  
tle appearance soever there may be, in  
the present State of the World, that Truth  
and Righteousness should prevail, yet the  
Hope of those things, which God, who can-  
not lie, hath promised since the World  
began, stands for ever firm and unshaken:  
So that 'tis with great reason, as well as  
with noble eloquence, that the prophet

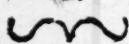
S E R M. *Habakkuk* expresses himself, *ch. iii. 17.*

II. *Altho' the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines; tho' the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; tho' the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* The Last instance I shall mention of the Particulars, wherein consists the *Internal Worship* of God, or the proper Regard we are to bear to him in the *Affections* of our *Minds*, is That of *Loving* him for his *Goodness*. *Goodness*, is the Proper Motive and Object of *Love*: And therefore, as, comparatively speaking, *there is none Good, but One, that is God*; He being the Alone Author of every good thing we enjoy: so He alone likewise, comparatively speaking, is consequently the Proper Object of *Love*. By which *Love towards God*, we ought always carefully to observe, is Never meant That Enthusiastick Warmth of Imagination, which is the essential character of *Fanaticism*; but (which is the just and proper Affection of a rational Creature



Creature towards its beneficent Author,) S E R M.  
'tis a *Desire* of *pleasing* him, a *Desire* of II.  
performing his Will, a *Desire* of being  
acceptable to him, a *Desire* of partaking  
of his Favour and Rewards, rather than  
of the unreasonable Pleasures of Unrighte-  
ousness. This is the True Notion of  
*Loving God*. From whence, by the way,  
it clearly appears, that the Love of *Vir-*  
*tue* and *Truth*, the Love of *Righteousness*  
and *Goodness*, is truly and indeed Loving  
of *God*. From hence also at the same  
time 'tis very manifest, that mens doing  
their Duty with a Hope and Prospect of  
*Future Rewards*, is not (as some have ri-  
diculously argued,) a Mercenary Tem-  
per. For the Rewards which God has  
promised to them that love and obey him,  
are of such a Nature, as either them-  
selves consist in, or are essentially con-  
join'd with, the Perfection of *Virtue*.  
The Rewards prepared for Them who  
shall be thought worthy to obtain That  
Life and the Resurrection from the Dead,  
are new Heavens and a new Earth, where-  
in dwelleth *righteousness*, 2 Pet. iii. 13;  
where the People shall be *All righteous*,

SERM. II. lx. 21; in the City of God, wherein  
II.



*to there shall in no wise enter any thing  
that defileth, neither whosoever worketh  
abomination, or maketh a Lie, Rev. xxi. 27.*

This is a Reward, the Prospect and Desire whereof, in the performance of our Duty, is no Diminution from the most exalted Love of God, or even of *Virtue* for *Virtues* sake; but is indeed the very same thing, or entirely coincident with, the Love of *Virtue* and the Love of God. For which reason, not only *Moses*; who, when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season; Esteeming the reproach of *Christ* greater Riches than the Treasures in *Egypt*; not only *Moses*, I say, is in Scripture recorded, without any mark of Blame, to have had Respect, in all this, to the Recompence of Reward, *Heb. xi. 26*; and *Abraham*, that he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, *ver. 10.* and the Martyrs of old, that they endured what they did, in hopes of obtaining a better Resurrection, *ver. 35*:

But

## Of the UNITY of GOD.

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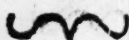
But even of our Saviour himself 'tis expressly affirmed, *ch. xii. 2.* that for the joy which was set before him, he endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God. S E R M. II.

2dly, The worshipping the Lord our God, as it denotes primarily That *Internal Regard* we are to bear towards him in the *Affections of our Minds*; so it implies likewise, in the next place, our making suitable *Confession* with our *Mouths*, *Rom. x. 10.* *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* For 'tis our Duty, not only to have a constant Sense of God upon our own *Minds*, but to honour him also *before men*, and to promote the Knowledge of *Him* and his *Truth* in the World. And This Obligation, includes *Many Particulars*. The first and most obvious, is, our obligation to *make profession* of the *True Religion*, how detrimental soever such profession may prove to our present temporal Interest. This is the Foundation of all the Slanders and Calumnies, of all the Reproaches and Persecutions, which the



S E R M.

II.



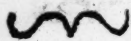
best and most virtuous men have in all Ages and in all Nations suffered, upon account of their adhering to the Cause of Truth and Righteousness. *Whosoever, says our Saviour, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven: But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven,* Matt. x. 32. And still more distinctly, *Mark viii. 38. Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the Holy Angels.* This therefore is the first and principal Instance of *Confessing God* with our *Mouths*; The making constant *Profession* of the True Doctrine of Religion, how much soever we may possibly suffer thereby in our temporal Interest. Nor need I here to have added the word, *possibly*; Since indeed it can scarce possibly be otherwise, but that mens steadfastly adhering to what is True and Right, will always be more or less hurtful to their Temporal Interest. For though *in the general,*

the

the Profession of Christian Religion does not S E R M.  
 now expose men to persecution, as in the II.  
 Apostles Days; but on the contrary, Chri-  
 tianity is in Some Countries publicly sup-  
 ported and encouraged: yet in the *particu-*  
*lar* circumstances of life, such is the Igno-  
 rance and Superstition, such the Prejudices,  
 Passions, and Animosities of Men; that  
 whosoever will not suffer himself to be  
 swayed, according to the Customs of a  
 corrupt Age, by Other Arguments than  
 those of Truth and Right; will certainly  
 lose very many Advantages; and perhaps  
 be despised and ill-spoken of for so doing:  
*yea, and All that will live godly in Christ*  
*Jesus, says the Apostle, shall suffer perse-*  
*cution, 2 Tim. iii. 12.* Next therefore to  
 the Profession of True Religion in general,  
 there is further implied in this Duty of  
 Confessing God with our Mouths, an obliga-  
 tion not to be ashamed of Truth and Right,  
 of Virtue and Goodness, in all particular  
 Cases wherein they may happen to be con-  
 tested. St. Paul, as he declared in general,  
 that he was *not ashamed of the Gospel of*  
*Christ, Rom. i. 16;* so, when in a *par-*  
*ticular circumstance* he judged St. Peter to

SERM.

II.



have departed from the Simplicity of the Gospel, he *withstood him to the Face*, Gal. ii. 11. And 'tis accordingly excellent Advice which is given by the Son of Sirach, Eccclus. iv. 20. *Beware of Evil, and be not ashamed when it concerns thy Soul: For there is a shame that bringeth Sin, and there is a shame which is glory and grace: Accept no person against thy Soul, and let not thy Reverence of any man cause thee to fall: Refrain not to speak, when there is occasion to do good; strive for the Truth unto death, and the Lord shall fight for thee.* Promoting steddily the Interest of Truth and Virtue, is making confession of God, who is the Author of Truth, and whose Glory and Honour is the establishment of Virtue and Righteousness. In these things consists the Kingdom of God; in these consists the excellency of rational Creatures: And when men of corrupt minds despise every thing as Folly and Enthusiasm, that happens not to serve the Interests of Covetousness and Ambition; *then to adhere stedfastly to Truth and Virtue, notwithstanding all the Contempt that may be cast upon them, is what our Saviour calls, not being*



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being ashamed of Him, and of his words, SERM.  
II.  
in an adulterous and perverse generation.

The remaining particulars included in this Duty of *confessing God with our mouths*, are, *speaking honourably of him*, or *reverencing his Name*, in all *private conversation*; and *paying him Solemn Worship in publick*. And These Instances of Duty, will not easily be neglected by Such persons, whose Minds have made natural to themselves the fore-mentioned Habits of Virtue. For in like manner as our Saviour argues in Another case, *Mark ix. 39. There is no man which shall do a Miracle in my Name, that can highly speak evil of Me*; so here likewise, there is no man who habitually loves *Truth and Virtue*, that can easily speak dishonourably of God, the Supreme Good, or lightly take his Name in vain, or that will not take pleasure in promoting his *Publick Honour and Worship*. But

3dly, and lastly: The *Worship of God*, as it denotes the Regard we are to bear to him in the *Affections of our Minds*, and in the *Expressions of our Mouths*; so it includes likewise, and That principally and chiefly, the Honour we are to pay him  
in

S E R M. in all the *Actions* of our *Lives*. It includes

II.

 This, I say, *principally* and *chiefly*. For, worshipping God with our *Lips*, unless accompanied with Obedience in our *Lives*, is nothing more than a Solemn Hypocrisy, and is an Abomination before God. And the Regard we bear to him in the Affections of our *Minds*, can by This only Proof be shown, either to Others or to Ourselves, to be real and sincere; if it causes us to *imitate* him, and to endeavour to *please* him, by a *Life* of *Virtue* and *true Holiness*. For by the *Fruit* only, as our Saviour directs, can we possibly make a right judgment of the Goodness of the *Tree*. The Sacrifice therefore *most acceptable* unto God, is that which St. Paul elegantly styles, *Rom. xii. 1. the presenting* Our selves a *Living Sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God, which is our Reasonable Service*. Other things are not to be left undone, and the *external* Worship of God is by no means to be neglected; But the *End* and Great Design of All, is the uniform Practice of *Virtue and Righteousness*, in the whole Course of our *Lives*. In all *comparative* Speaking, *Behold, to obey, is better than Sacrifice; and*  
to

to hearken, than the Fat of Rams: Or, as S E R M.  
it is expressed by the Scribe, whom our II.  
Lord commends, in the Gospel, *Mark xii.*  
*33. To love God with all the Heart,---and*  
*his Neighbour as himself, is more than all*  
*whole burnt-offerings and Sacrifices.*

AND NOW, having thus largely and distinctly explained, [*1st*, the *Supposition* laid down in the Text; that there is *One*, and *One Only*, True God or Supreme Lord of all things; and *2dly*, *What That Duty* towards him is, which is expressed in] *these* words, *Thou shalt worship the Lord God: I should in the*

III. NEXT place, from the following words, *And him Only shalt thou serve*, have proceeded to explain the nature of the several Species of *Idolatry*: Which is the Great Branch of this fundamental Commandment. But the Time will not permit me to enter upon the Consideration of This matter, till a further opportunity.



The first of these is the fact that the  
 Government has been unable to secure  
 the necessary funds to carry out its  
 policy of non-interference in the  
 internal affairs of the country.

THE OREGONIAN

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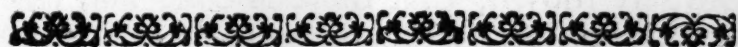
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is One, and One Only, Time God or the  
 prime Lord of all things; The Lord the  
 God, who, to show what Time God is  
 words him, in which is contained a



# S E R M O N III.

*Of the UNITY of GOD.*



MATT. iv. 10. latter part.

*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,  
and Him only shalt thou serve.*



N discoursing upon these im- S E R M.  
portant words of our Savi- III.

our ; I proposed, 1<sup>st</sup>, to con-  
sider the *Supposition* laid  
down in the Text ; that there

is *One*, and *One Only*, True God or Su-  
preme *Lord* of all things ; *The Lord thy*  
*God.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, to show *What* That Duty to-  
wards him, is, which is expressed in  
*these*

SERM. *these words, Thou shalt worship the Lord*  
 III. *thy God. And 3dly, it being added, Him*  
 ~~~~~ *Only shalt thou serve, from thence I pro-*  
 posed to take an occasion of explaining
 distinctly, the nature of the several Spe-
 cies of *Idolatry*: Which is the Great
 Breach of this fundamental Command-
 ment.

THE two Former of these Heads, I
 have already gone through; Having
 largely shown, that there is *One*, and *One*
Only, True God, or Supreme *Lord* of all
 things; stiled here by our Saviour, *The*
Lord thy God: And that our *Duty* to-
 wards him, exprest in *These words, Thou*
shalt worship the Lord thy God; denotes
 every religious, every virtuous Act or Ha-
 bit, by which Regard is shown to God,
 either in the *Affections* of our *Minds*, or
 in the *Expressions* of our *Mouths*, or in
 the *Actions* of our *Lives*.

IT remains, that I proceed at this
 time from the latter part of the Text,
And Him Only shalt thou serve, to ex-
 plain distinctly the Nature of the several
 Species of *Idolatry*. Which Sin consists,
 either in setting up *Idol-Gods*, in opposi-
 tion

tion to, or in conjunction with, the True S E R M.
 God; or in worshipping the True God III.
himself, after an *idolatrous manner*; ei-
 ther representing him under visible and
 corporeal *Images*, or applying to him
 through false and *Idol-Mediators*, in di-
 minution of the Honour of the One True
Mediatour, whom God himself has ex-
 pressly appointed to be Alone our Advo-
 cate, Intercessor and Judge.

I. THE *First* and Highest Degree of
 Idolatry, is, when men totally casting off
 all Belief of the True God, set up, in di-
 rect *opposition* to Him, some imagination
 of their own, if not as a formal Object of
 Worship, yet at least as That to which
 Alone they ascribe all those Great Effects,
 which are indeed the Bountiful Gifts of
 God to Mankind, and the sovereign Be-
 nefits of his Government over the World.
 Of This kind are the Notions which
 Some men frame to themselves, of *Na-
 ture, Fate, Chance*, and the like; when
 they ascribe the Being and Order, the
 Beauty and Usefulness, of the World and
 all things that are therein, to These as
 their real Causes; which in Truth are
 nothing

SERM.
III.

nothing but mere empty words, mere abstract Notions, mere Fictions or *Idols* of the Imagination, which have no real Existence, or (as *St Paul* expresses himself in a like case) are *Nothing in the World*. For, What is *Nature*? What is *Fate*, or *Chance*? Are they any real Beings, or Agents? or can That be truly the Cause of any thing, which itself has really no subsistence? or are not these Notions plainly the mere Refuges of Ignorance, and the thin Cover of affected Perverseness? Less unreasonable of the two, were those antient Idolaters, who stopping short at the immediate and visible Causes of the Life and Food and Plenty they enjoyed, worshipped the Sun and Moon and Stars of Heaven, as the *Authors* of That Good, whereof they were really and undeniably the *Instruments*. Less unreasonable, I say, was even *This*; than to attribute the causes of all things, to the efficiency of a mere abstract Nothing. And yet the worshipping these glorious and most noble parts of the visible Universe, was a Folly altogether without Excuse, even in the darkest Times of heathen-ignorance; Be-

Of the UNITY of GOD.

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S E R M.

III.

cause Reason itself, without Any Revelation, was abundantly sufficient, to lead men from the wonderful operations of unintelligent and lifeless Matter, to the Knowledge of an Intelligent, Living, and All-wise Cause. For, *the invisible things of God from the creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20.* So that Job (who appears not to have had Any knowledge of the Jewish religion) could say: *If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in brightness; and my Heart hath been secretly inticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.* Which natural knowledge of God, when men had once suffered to be corrupted; and had *changed the Truth of God into a Lie, worshipping and serving the Creature instead of the Creator, who is Blessed for ever; Idolatry quickly spread itself into Many Branches: And as Some worshipped the Host of Heaven, the Sun and Moon and Stars, because of*

V O L. I.

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their

S E R M.

III.

their Beauty and Usefulness; so Others, carried away with Flattery towards their Kings and Governours, deified and worshipped, after their Deaths, those who in their life-time, for exercising Lordship over them, had been stiled Benefactors. This latter, was the Idolatry of the Antient *Greeks* and *Romans*; those *Learned* Nations; who in all *other* respects improved and civilized themselves to such a degree, and cultivated all Arts and Sciences to so high a Pitch, that all countries in the World, in comparison of *Them*, were stiled and justly accounted *barbarous*. But their *Religion*, these Learned and Famous Nations received in the blindest and most stupid manner, by Tradition from their ignorant and barbarous Ancestors; their *Jupiter* himself, the Object of their most solemn Worship, being no other than a *King*, who, in the antient dark and fabulous Ages, had reigned in the Isle of *Crete*. Of the same kind, seems to have been the idolatry of the *Chaldeans*; at the time when *Abram*, in order to set up the worship of the True God, departed out of his country, and from

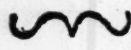
Of the UNITY of GOD.

51

from his Kindred, and from his Father's house, Gen. xii. 1. And afterwards in the kingdom of Israel, Baal; concerning whom we find *Elijah* thus speaking to the people; *If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him;* This Baal (I say) was no other than [*Belus*] an antient King of *Assyria*, whose Worship *Abab* had established in such direct opposition to the Worship of the God of Heaven. SERM.
III.

2. THE next Species of Idolatry, is, when men set up False Gods, not indeed totally in exclusion of, but in conjunction with the Worship of the One True God of the Universe. Of This kind was the idolatry of those *Heathens*, who though they knew and acknowledged the True God, from that Light of Nature and Reason and the Works of Creation, which the before-mentioned more stupid Idolaters had no regard to; yet at the same time they worshipped also many Other imaginary Deities, as *Parts* or *Branches* or particular *Manifestations* of the Supreme Being, in particular *Places* or

S E R M. upon particular *occasions*. Not much un-

III. like to which, was the Practise of those
 *Samaritans*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 33 and 41.

who *feared the Lord*, and yet at the same time, as the Text tells us, *served also their own Gods after the manner of the Nations*. Under the same Head, may be reduced the opinion of the *Syrians* in *Ahab's* time; who fancied that different parts of the World, were under the dominion and government of different Gods: Concerning whom we read, 1 *Kings* xx. 28. that *the Syrians said, The Lord is God of the Hills, but he is not God of the Vallies*. Lastly, of the same

Habentes
 phantasma
 idolo-
 latriæ, says
 Irenæus of
 the Valen-
 tinian E-
 manati-
 ons.

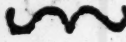
kind was the idolatrous notion of the *Manichees* in later times, even since the times of the Gospel; who taught that Good proceeded from a Supreme Almighty Good Being, and that at the same time Evil proceeded from another equally Supreme All-powerful Evil Being.

3. A *Third Sort* or Degree of Idolatry, is, when men worship indeed the *True God, and Him Only*, but yet after an *idolatrous manner*; representing him under *visible and corporeal Images*. God,
 is

Of the UNITY of GOD.

53.

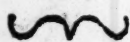
is a *spiritual* Being; a Being of infinite S E R M.
Greatness, Power and Majesty; whom the III.
Heavens, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain. And 'tis the greatest indignity imaginable, to conceive that he who *made the World and all things that are therein*, who *giveth unto All Life and Breath*, and whose *Offspring* (or the *Work of whose hands*) even Men and all rational *Spirits* are, should himself be like unto (or can be represented by) gold ACTS xvii.
or silver or stone graven by Art and Man's ²⁹
Device. And therefore 'tis with great Justice that St Paul reproves even the Heathen-world, in that, *when they knew God by the Light of Nature and Reason*, yet, contrary to reason, they *changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things*, Rom. i. 23. To the Jews, God, in the *Second Commandment*, confirmed this Law of Nature, by a literal and express prohibition, that they should not make to themselves any image or representation of *him*, under the similitude of any creature whatsoever; of any thing ei-

S E R M. ther in the *Heavens, Earth, or Water;*
III. of *Sun, Moon, or Stars; of Men, Beasts,*
 or *Fishes.* To represent God, the in-
visible Author of all Good, under the
likeness of those most *excellent* of all
the visible parts of the creation, those
most *beneficial* instruments and conveyers
of his Blessings to Mankind, the *Sun,*
Moon and Stars; which in Scripture
is called *worshipping the Host of Hea-*
ven: To *This,* I say, one *may possibly*
conceive, how in the days of ignorance
there *might be* some Temptation: And
therefore, not without very apparent
reason, the Scripture is distinct and par-
ticular, in setting forth how all these
things were brought into Being, *merely*
by *His* Will and Power; that for *His*
pleasure *alone* they *Are, and were created;*
that the *Heavens* are *the Work of His*
bands, and that 'tis *His Sun that shineth*
on the evil and on the good. Also, *Man*
being the Lord of this lower world; that
weak minds should be tempted to repre-
sent God under a *Humane* similitude,
This likewise may easily be accounted
for

for. But that any one should ever be *so* S E R M. III.
absurd, as to represent the Almighty Lord and Father of the Universe, under the likeness of *Birds and Beasts and creeping things*; This is a degree of stupidity that would be altogether incredible, did not *profane history* assure us of the Folly of the *Egyptians* in this kind, and the *sacred history* give us a very particular Account how the *Jews themselves* in the wilderness *changed their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay*, saying, *This is the God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt*, and *proclaiming a Feast* to it under the Sacred Name of *Jehovah*; And *Jeroboam*, in after times, caused *Israel to sin* again the same Sin, by setting up Calves in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as Representatives of the God of Heaven, who had commanded himself to be worshipped without Any Image in the Temple of *Jerusalem*. Nay, even after the greater Light of the *Gospel*; Christians, as they stile themselves, in the Church of *Rome*, have not been a whit behind the grossest antient Idolaters, in their corruptions of This kind; making Pic-

S E R M.

III.

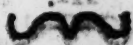


tures and Images of the Invisible God, even of the Father Almighty, in express opposition to the Second commandment. And in the matter of Transubstantiation; fancying the elements to be changed into the Body of Christ, and knowing the Body of Christ to be in union with his Divinity, and his Divinity to be in union with that of his Father; from hence, by three or four steps of multiplied idolatry, they pay to the mere elements of bread and wine, That Worship which indeed is due only to the God and Father of All, even to Him who *so loved the World, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* In which and the like cases, an unaccountable Tyranny has for many Ages compelled Learned men to employ their whole skill and abilities, not in getting a right understanding of things, but in defending implicitly what ignorant and unlearned Persons had decided for them before.

4. ANOTHER Kind or Species of Idolatry, is when Men apply themselves to God through *False* and *Idol-Mediators*, in diminution of the Honour of the *One True Mediator*, whom God himself has expressly appointed to be *Alone* our Advocate, Intercessor and Judge. God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son; who, when he had by himself purged our Sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High; where he ever liveth, to make intercession for us. To Us Christians therefore, as there is (if we will use St. Paul's expression) *One God, even the Father, of whom are all things*; so there is also *One Lord*, even *Jesus Christ, thro' whom are all things*. For there is *One God, and One Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. As therefore the setting up any Idol or *False God*, in opposition to, or in conjunction with the *True God*, is *Idolatry* with regard to God; so the setting up any Idol or *False Mediator*, in opposition to, or in conjunction

SERM.

III



1 Cor. viii.

6.

SERM. junction with the *One True Mediator*,

III.



is Idolatry with regard to *Christ*. Which most evidently shows, that the Worship paid by the Church of *Rome* to *Angels* and to *Saints departed*, to *Images* and *Relicks*, and to the *Blessed Virgin*, whom they profanely stile the *Mother of God*; is truly and properly *Idolatry*: And that the Excuse they plead, that the Worship thus paid, is not *Divine*, but only *Mediatorial* Worship; is nothing to the purpose, and alters not at all the *Nature*, but only a *Circumstance* of the Crime: An *Idol-Mediator* being as truly and plainly an *Idol*, and a departing from *Christ* our only true *Mediator* and *Advocate*; as the worshipping an *Idol-God*, is a departure from the *Living and True God*. *St. Paul* argues in this manner expressly and most prophetically; *Col. ii. 18*; *Let no man beguile you of your Reward, in a voluntary humility [or will-worship, ver. 23.] and worshipping of Angels; intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head,* which is *Christ*. And the same thing

was

was long before prophesied of by *Daniel*, S E R M. III.
 ch. xi. 38. when, speaking of *Antichrist*,
 he foretells concerning him, that not
 only *a God whom his Fathers knew not*,
should be honour, that is, should corrupt
 the true Notion and Worship of God;
 but moreover, that he should *honour* also
Gods of Forces, or (as it is more rightly
 rendred in the *Margin* of the Bible)
 should worship divers *Gods-Protectors*,
 that is, Saints and Angels and Images, on
 whom men should rely for Protection
 and Salvation.

5. FIFTHLY and *Lastly*; Besides all
 these several Kinds and Degrees of Idola-
 try, *literally* and strictly so called; there
 are also several *other* things, which be-
 cause they are, in different ways and
 manners, a departing in some measure
 from God, and placing our reliance or
 our affections upon some wrong Object;
 they are therefore in Scripture *figurative-
 ly*, and by way of analogy or propor-
 tion, represented as *Idolatrous Practices*.
 Thus St. *Peter* describes those *Jewish
 Profelytes*, who had indulged themselves
 in being present, though not perhaps at
 the

SERM. the actual Worship, yet at the Idol-
 III. Feasts of the Heathen; he describes them
 as having wrought the Will of the Gen-
 tiles,-----in revellings, banquetings, and
 abominable idolatries, 1 Pet. iv. 3. And
 St. Paul, speaking of Jews, who never
 had literally been idolaters, but, neglect-
 ing the true Will of God, had placed
 their whole Trust upon what he there
 calls *the weak and beggarly elements* of a
 formal and ceremonious religion, name-
 ly, their Superstitious observation of *days*
and months and times and years; he thus
 expresses his censure of them, Gal. iv. 8.
then when ye knew not God, ye did ser-
vice unto Them [unto those things] *which*
by nature are no Gods. And among Chri-
 stians, mens taking delight in promoting
 Corruptions of Religion introduced by
 human power and violence, the Scrip-
 ture calls *falling down and worshipping*
the wild Beast, that is, paying more re-
 gard to the Will of oppressive and un-
 reasonable Men, than to the Will of God;
 [And worshipping *the Image of the Beast*,
 that is, (with some allusion perhaps to
 Nebuchadnezzar's golden Image,) being
 fond

fond of false and superstitious religions, S E R M.
 set up for the sake of Worldly Power, Do- III
 minion and Grandeur, by Popes and Pa- 
 pal Councils, those *Images* of Authority
 sitting in the Seat and Temple of God,
 deceiving the Rulers and Nations of the
 Earth.] Further yet: Because men who
 have no right Sense of God upon their
 Minds, are very apt to place That Whole
Trust and *Reliance* upon the *Riches* and
Power of this present World, which
 ought to be placed upon God Alone; hence
 St. Paul, by a very elegant figure, thus
 expresses himself; *Covetousness, which is* Col. iii. 5.
Idolatry; and Covetous man, who is an Eph. v. 5.
Idolater: And charges them who are rich in 1 Tim. vi.
this World,-----not to Trust in uncertain 17.
Riches, but in the Living God. And
 our Saviour himself, in the same figure
 and manner of speaking, declares, *Matt. vi.*
24, No man can serve (no man can wor-
ship) two Masters,----ye cannot serve God
and Mammon. Lastly: Because very vi-
 cious and debauched persons, have no re-
 gard, no intention, no desire of *pleasing*
God; but are wholly intent upon plea-
sing and gratifying their own corrupt in-
clinations,

S E R M. *clinations, and entirely Servants and Slaves*

III. to their *pleasures*; therefore the Apostle elegantly represents *These* also, as figurative Idolaters; *whose God is their Belly*, Phil. iii. 19; and who *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly*, Rom. xvi. 18.

HAVING thus at large explained the *Nature, Kinds, and Degrees of Idolatry* in the *literal* sense; and in what manner 'tis sometimes applied also *figuratively* to *Other Vices*: I shall conclude with a general Observation, or two, upon the whole. And

1st, I OBSERVE, that *Idolatry* is a Crime which all men hugely detest the *Name* of, and yet it is very apt to grow upon superstitious persons by insensible degrees. Thus the *Jews*, tho' God had given them the most express Command in the World, that as they had never seen any similitude of him, so they should never represent him by any Image, or by the Likeness of Any Creature whatsoever; yet first they set up in the wilderness the *golden Calf*, upon a *particular occasion*; and afterwards they *established*

blished Jeroboam's calves, in Dan and Bethel, for a constancy; as representations of the True God: And from thence they fell to worship the Image of Baal, who was a False God: And, by degrees, the Gods of the Nations, whom the Lord had cast out from before them, crept in amongst them: Till at length they proceeded to that Heighth of Impiety, as to Sacrifice even their own children to Moloch. In like manner among Christians, departed Saints were at first very honourably spoken of, as having been Martyrs for the Word of God and for the Testimony of Jesus; and their Relicks began to be had in esteem, as Memorials of them. Afterwards, This veneration towards them increased, to the setting them up as Advocates and Intercessors with God; which was directly idolizing them, to the great diminution of the Honour due to Christ our Only Mediatour. In order to preserve the Remembrance of these Saints the better, Pictures and Images were introduced; first as historical representations only, to assist the Memory: But after

SERM.
III.


SERM. after a while, peculiar Favours and Blessings, and a singular efficaciousness of Prayers, were believed to be annexed to the places wherein such Images, or such or such a particular Image was set up: Just as Balaam, when God would not permit him to curse Israel from One hill, fancied he might curse them from Another. And at last, when This corruption arrived at its heighth, the Worship came to be paid directly to the Images themselves, even to wood and stone; men who called themselves Christians, falling down to the stock of a Tree; to idols that have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not: They that make them, are like unto them, and so are all such as put their trust in them, Ps. cxv. 8.

2dly, I OBSERVE, that, in the whole Scripture-history, there is no Crime attended with a greater general corruption of manners, or constantly threatned with a severer punishment, than this of idolatry in every kind and degree of it, Among the Heathens, for This cause, says St. Paul, (for their departing from the Law of Nature in This point,) God gave

gave men up unto vile affections, and S.E.R.M.
 ———to a reprobate mind, Rom. i. 26, 28. III.

And for *This* cause originally, did God root out the seven nations of the *Canaanites* from before the children of *Israel*. The *Jews*, whenever They fell into any degree of this Crime, immediately the consequences became intolerable. When they had erected the golden calf, *the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play, i. e. to debauch themselves.* And *Balaam* tempted them to *idolatry* and *fornication* together: And then God gave them up to worship the *Host of Heaven*. And at length (as I before observed) they came to *sacrifice even their children to Moloch*. To prevent these Evils, God, at the first giving of the Law, strictly forbad all Approaches to this vice; and by his Prophets constantly declared, that he would not give his Honour to another, nor his Praise to graven Images. He commanded, not only *actual idolatry*, but even mens *tempting* each other to it, to be punished with *Death*. He threatned, that, for *This* Crime, he would *visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the children*.

SERMON. unto the third and fourth generation; That

III. is, Upon a People under a national covenant, and Blessed or beloved (as St. Paul speaks) for the Fathers sakes, he would; for their national irreligion, send down very Long temporal Judgments. And This threatening has actually been fulfilled upon them in such a captivity and such a dispersion, as never happened to any other nation upon the Face of the Earth.

AMONG Christians, (for the greater part even of Those also who call themselves Christians, have for many Ages been Idolaters, as the Kingdom of Israel had been before;) Among Christians, I say, the introducing This Vice, has not only corrupted the Simplicity of the Gospel, but has also greatly encouraged all immorality, by making Superstition an equivalent instead of a virtuous Life; and particularly it has been the cause of infinite Cruelties and Persecutions among Christians, in order to support tyranny and Superstition; insomuch that even of the Christian Church it is prophesied in Scripture, that in her should be found
the

Of the UNITY of GOD.

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the blood of Saints and of Prophets, and **SERM.**
of all that are slain upon the Earth. **III.**

For our deliverance from this tyranny
by the Reformation, we can never be too
thankful; nor ever sufficiently careful,
to guard against every appearance of ap-
proaching towards it again.

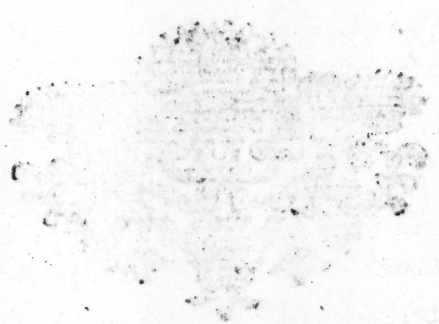


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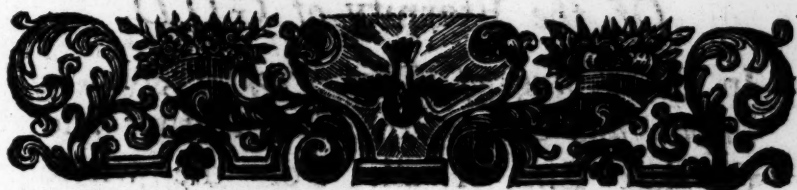
Of the Unity of GOD.

The blood of Jesus and of prophets, and
of all that have shed their blood for
our redemption, is one and the same
by the redemption, we are saved by
faith; not even for a moment
to ground any every argument of
proceeding towards it again.



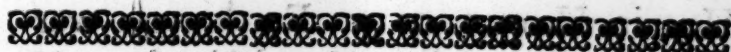
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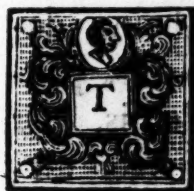
SERMON IV.

Of the Eternity of GOD.



Rev. i. 8.

I am Alpha and Omega, the Be-^{SERM.}
ginning and the Ending, saith^{IV.}
the Lord; which is, and which
was, and which is to come, The
Almighty.



THESE words are a description of the Person of the God and Father of All, from the Primary Attributes of his Nature, and from the Part which he is represented to bear peculiarly in delivering This Prophecy.

SER M. In the giving of This Prophecy, he is

IV.

Alpha and Omega, the First Author and the last End of all. For the whole Prophecy is, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God, [that is, the Father,] gave unto him, ver. 19. And the manner of his giving it, is very elegantly described, ch. iv. and v. by a representation of God sitting upon a Throne, Supreme over all; and giving unto the Lamb a Book, which none other but He, in Heaven or on Earth, was worthy to open. Likewise absolutely, with regard to his Proper Nature, the primary Attributes of God and Father of All, are; He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the first Author and Fountain from whom all things originally proceed, and the ultimate End in whom all things finally terminate; He is, "which is, and which was, and which is to come," eternal of himself by absolute necessity of Nature, being derived from None, begotten of None, proceeding from None. Lastly, He is, The Almighty, Supreme absolutely over all; For so the word in the Original Properly signifies; including every one of the

Of the Eternity of G O D.

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S E R M.

IV.



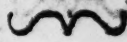
the Divine Attributes, and not, as the *English* word sounds, all Power only. The former part of this Description, viz. the words, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End*, are also applied to *Christ*, ver. 11. of *This* chapter, and ver. 13. of the 22^d chapter; In which places they signify, that our Saviour, by the good pleasure of the Father, (*all things being deliver'd unto him of the Father*, Matt. xi, 27.) is the *Beginner* and *Completer* of our Salvation; the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the *Author* and the *Finisher* of our Faith, as *St. Paul* paraphrases the words, *Heb. xii, 2*. But in the *Text*, 'tis evident these words are spoken of *the Father*; both from their being joined immediately with the following words, *which is, and which was, and which is to come*, which in the 4th verse are used express as a periphrasis or distinguishing Description of the *Person of the Father*; And the same thing appears also from the whole Thread and Connexion of the Discourse. For the *Three* Divine Persons, as bearing so many Distinct parts in the delivering

SERM.
IV.

livering of This prophecy, are *Thrice* distinctly mentioned in This chapter. First, in the Preface or Title, *ver. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ; which God gave unto him;—and he sent and signified it by his Angel, [his Messenger,] unto his Servant John.* Then again in the Salutation, *ver. 4. Grace be unto you, and Peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, (that is, from the Father;) and from the seven Spirits which are before his Throne, (that is, from the Holy Ghost, whose Ministers all the prophetick Spirits are;) and from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness.* The Salutation is the same, (only in sublime words according to the prophetick Style,) with That of St. Paul; *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost.* Then the *third* time, in the Body of the Discourse, or in the entrance of the description of the Vision it self, he resumes his mention of *the Father*, *ver. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord,*

Of the Eternity of GOD.

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Lord; which is, and which was, SERM.
and which is to come, the Almighty; IV.
And his mention of the Holy Ghost, 
ver. 10. I was in the Spirit; And of the
Son, ver. 13, 18. I saw one like unto the
Son of Man,----saying,----I am he that
liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive
for evermore.

THE Occasion and Connexion of the words, being thus explained; the Doctrine from thence arising to be discoursed upon at this time, is That primary Attribute of the Divine Nature, his absolute and independent *Eternity*. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

IN discoursing upon which Subject, I shall 1st, briefly set forth in general the several Significations we find in Scripture of the words *eternal*, *immortal*, and *everlasting*. 2^{dly}, I shall offer some Observations, concerning the *Eternity* of God in particular. And 3^{dly}, (which is the the most material,) I shall consider of what *Use* this Meditation may be to us in *Practice*.

IN

S E R M. IN the *First* place, 'tis very necessary in general, for preventing Confusion in our Notions, and for the more distinct explication of several Passages in Scripture, to observe the different Senses in which the words *eternal*, *immortal* and *everlasting*, are used by the sacred Writers.

SOMETIMES, (which is the *lowest* Sense they are ever taken in, and yet a very frequent one,) they signify nothing more but only a *long* duration, Thus Gen. xvii. 8. *I will give unto thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, for an everlasting possession*; the meaning is, to him and his Heirs for a *long*, unlimited succession. Num. x. 8. *The Sons of Aaron shall blow with the Trumpets, and they shall be to you for an Ordinance for ever: for ever*, that is, as long as your government and establishment shall last. Gen. xlix. 26. *The Hills are called Everlasting*; And Hab. iii. 6, *the everlasting Mountains*; By which words all that is intended to be express'd, is, their being strong and permanent as the frame and constitution of the

the Earth. 1 Sam. iii. 13. *I have told* SERM.
IV.
Eli, that I will judge his house for
ever; It signifies only, for many suc-
cessive generations. And Exod. xxi. 6.
He shall serve his Master for ever. The
meaning is, He shall not go free at the
end of the usual Term of seven years,
but shall continue with him till his Ma-
ster's Death, or till the year of Jubilee.
This is the first and lowest Sense of the
words *eternal* and *for ever*; to signify
only, after a figurative manner of speak-
ing, a certain long Period.

THE next Sense they are used in, is
to denote a Duration continuing as long
as the Subject exists, and then putting it
in a State out of which it shall never
be restored. Thus Num. xxiv. 20. *Ama-
lek was the first of the Nations, but his
latter End shall be, that he perish for
ever*; The meaning is, He shall never
recover to be again a mighty Nation.
Deut. xiii. 16. *That City shall be an Heap
for ever*; The Sense is, as it follows in
the very next words, *it shall not be built
again.* But the most remarkable Pas-
sage of all, to our present purpose, is
that

SERM. that expression of St. Jude, ver. 7. Even
 IV. *as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Cities*
 about them,-----are set forth for an Ex-
 ample, suffering the vengeance of eternal
 Fire. 'Tis plain the Apostle does not
 here mean *Hell-Fire*, because *That*, being
 at present invisible, cannot be said to
 be set forth for an Example, but as a
Threatning only. Whatever is set forth
 for an Example, must be something that
 is already present, or past: And there-
 fore the *Vengeance of eternal Fire*, must
 in this place signify only *That Fire*,
 which irrecoverably destroyed the Cities
 of *Sodom*, and ended in their final or
 eternal overthrow.

IN other places of Scripture, the words
eternal and *for ever*, signify in a higher
 Sense, a Duration, not figuratively, but
properly and literally everlasting; with-
 out End, though not without Beginning.
 Thus *Angels* and the Souls of Men, are
eternal or *immortal*; and the *Happiness*
 they enjoy in Heaven, is *everlasting* Life,
 an *endless* and *eternal* weight of Glory.

LASTLY,

LASTLY, The Last and *highest* and SERM. IV. most absolutely perfect Sense of the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, is when they signify a Duration of inexhaustible and never-failing permanency, both without *Beginning* and without *End*; And not only so, but including also *Necessary* and *Independent* Existence, so as in *no* manner whatsoever to *derive* from any other. He who Thus exists, exists *of himself* absolutely, as the First Fountain and Origin of all Being, totally self-sufficient and independent of Any. And this is the peculiar property and distinguishing *personal* character, of the *Father only*; [of Him, by whose good pleasure all Creatures were created; of Him, from whom the Holy Spirit [itself] proceedeth; of Him, by whom the Son [himself] was begotten; of Him, who in the highest and most superlative Sense of the words, is *He which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

HAVING thus briefly in the *first* place, for preventing Confusion in our Notions, and for the more distinct explication of several passages in Scripture, set forth in general,

SERM. general the different senses in which the
 IV. words *eternal*, *immortal* and *everlasting*,
 are made use of by the sacred Writers :

I proceed now, in the *Second* place, to offer some Observations concerning this Doctrine of the *Eternity* of God in particular ; concerning *That* Eternity described in the Text, by the words *Which is and which was and which is to come*.

AND 1st we may observe, that This Eternity is a Perfection, Attribute or Character, by which God is *very frequently* described in *Scripture* ; in order to raise in our Minds a just Awe and Veneration of his divine Majesty. *Deut. xxxiii. 27. The Eternal God. Rom. xvi. 26. The everlasting God. Is. lvii. 15. The Holy One, that inhabiteth Eternity. I Sam. xv. 29. The Strength of Israel, (in the original it is, the Eternity of Israel,) will not lie nor repent. I Tim. i. 17. The King eternal, immortal. ch. vi. 16, who Only hath Immortality.* In the words of the Text, *He which is and which was and which is to come.* And, to mention but one passage more, *Pf. cii. 24. Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old*
hast

Of the Eternity of GOD.

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Hast thou laid the foundations of the Earth, SERM.
and the Heavens are the work of thy IV.
hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt
endure; yea, all of them shall wax old
like a garment; and as a vesture shalt
thou change them, and they shall be chang-
ed. But Thou art the same, and Thy
Years shall have no End. Of which last
words it is remarkable, that in the first
chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews* they
are also in a very proper Sense applied to
the Son, as the person by whom the Father
made, and by whom he governs all things
through all Ages; by whom God made the
worlds, ver. 2, & 10.

2dly. 'Tis to be observed, that not
only in *Scripture* is God frequently descri-
bed by this Attribute of Eternity, but
even under the *Light of Nature* also is he
represented to us after the same Manner.
For the very *Heathen Writers themselves*,
have spoken very justly and honourably of
God in this particular. And not to *Phi-*
losophers only, but even to the *meanest ca-*
pacities, are there obvious Arguments in
Reason, to prove clearly the Necessity of
this divine Perfection, and to set it before
them

S E R M. them in a practical and useful Light.

IV. For since 'tis in *Some* degree a Perfection, *to Be*; and a greater *Degree* of that Perfection, *to continue in Being*: 'tis evident, when we conceive of God the *most perfect* Being, we must conceive them to be infinite in *This* perfection also, as well as in others; and that, as his Power is not bounded by any opposite Strength, nor his Immensity terminated by any Bounds of *Place*, so neither is his Duration limited by any Periods of Time; but that he exists and lives and governs all things, from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning and without end.

A G A I N: 'Tis evident even to the meanest Capacity, which considers things at all; that He who first gave Being to all *other* things, could not possibly have any Beginning *himself*, and *must* therefore necessarily have existed from all Eternity; and that he who hath already existed *from* all eternity, *independently* and *of Himself*; cannot possibly be liable to be deprived of his Being, and must therefore *necessarily* exist for an Eternity to come.

3dly,

3dly. 'Tis worthy of Observation, as SERM.
 to the *Manner* of our conceiving the E- IV.
 ternity of God; that the Scholastick Wri-
 ters have generally described it to be, not a
Real Perpetual Duration, but *One Point*
 or *Instant* comprehending eternity, and
 wherein all things are really coexistent at
 once. But unintelligible Ways of Speak-
 ing, have (I think) never done any Ser-
 vice to Religion. The true Notion of
 the Divine Eternity, does not consist in
 making past things to be still present,
 and things future to be already come;
 [which is an exprefs contradiction:] But
 it consists in *This*, and in *This* it
 infinitely transcends the manner of ex-
 istence of all created Beings, even of
those which shall *continue for ever*;
 that whereas *Their* finite Minds can by
 no means comprehend all that is past,
 or understand perfectly the things that are
 present, much less know or have in their
 power the things that are to come; but
 their Thoughts and Knowledge and Pow-
 er, must of necessity have degrees and pe-
 riods, and be successive and transient as
 the Things themselves; The eternal, su-

SERM. preme Cause, on the contrary, has such a
 IV. perfect, independent, and unchangeable
 ~~~~~ comprehension of all things; that in every Point or Instant of *his* eternal Duration, all things past, present, and to come, must be, not indeed themselves present at once, (for That is a manifest contradiction;) but they must be as entirely known and represented to him in one single Thought or View, and all things present and future be as absolutely under his Power and Direction; *as if* there was really no Succession at all, and *as if* all things *had been*, (not that they really *are*,) actually present at once. *A Thousand years in thy sight, are but as yesterday*, Pf. xc. 4. And 2 Pet. iii. 8. *One day is with the Lord as a Thousand years, and a Thousand years as one day*. Not, a Thousand years *are* one day; but are to *Him*, as if they were only one day.

HAVING premised these few Observations concerning the Nature, Manner, and Proof of the Eternity of God; it remains in the *Third* and last place, (which is the most material,) that we consider of  
 2 what



what Use this Meditation may be to us in SERM.  
Practise. IV.

AND 1<sup>st</sup>, This Attribute of *Eternity*, absolute, necessary, and *independent*; is one of the principal Characters, by which the *True God of the Universe*, the One Maker and Governour of all things, the alone Author and Fountain of all Being and Power, is distinguished from *false Deities*, from false Gods, worshipped in *opposition to him*, without any *Power from him*, without any Authority whatsoever either in Nature or Reason, either inherent in themselves, or communicated from *him* that has it of *himself*. *Idols*, are Gods but of yesterday, and which perish to morrow: Beings, which have no Authority and Dominion over us; or perhaps, not real Beings at all, but mere Fictions and Imaginations only: *Lying Vanities*, as the Scripture elegantly stiles them; that is, mere Nothings; having nothing of reality in them; either no Being, or at least no Dominion and Authority over men. But the *True God of the Universe* thus describes himself, *Is. xliii. 10. I am He: Before me there was no God, nei-*

S E R M. *ther shall there be after me. He was before*

IV.

*all things, and he shall be after all things,*

*Eternal, Immutable, and Self-sufficient.*

*He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning*

*and the End; which is, and which was, and*

*which is to come.*

*The High  
and Lofly  
One, that  
inhabiteh  
Eternity.*

2dly. T H E confideration of the *Eter-*

*nity* of God, is an Argument why his

*Providence* ought not to be cavilled at,

nor his *Promises* doubted of; even though

there be no present appearance of the

Performance of his *Promises*; and no

present way of explaining, the Methods

of his *Providence*. All other Beings, ha-

ving Command only of the *present* Time;

if they cannot *immediately* accomplish

what they undertake, 'tis never certain

but some Change in their *own* state, or

some alteration in the Nature and Course

of *Things*, may prevent them from being

able to accomplish it *at all*. But God ha-

ving in his hands the Power of *all* Time

alike, can never be involved in any diffi-

culty, nor hindred by any intervening ac-

cidents, nor perplexed by any change of

things or circumstances, nor influenced by

any Length or Periods of Time; so as

either

either to become unable or unwilling to S E R M.  
 perform his remotest Promises, so as to IV.  
 find any difficulty in extricating the most  
 perplexed appearances in the Methods of  
 his Providence. Senseless therefore is the  
 objection of those Scoffers, who the Apo-  
 stle foretells should come in the last days,  
*walking after their own lusts, and saying,*  
*Where is the Promise of his coming? For*  
*since the Fathers fell asleep, all things*  
*continue as they were, from the Beginning*  
*of the creation, 2 Pet. iii. 4.* The Apostle  
 returns the true and plain Answer, *ver. 8.*  
*Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,*  
*that one day is with the Lord as a Thousand*  
*years, and a Thousand years as one day.*

3dly. THE consideration of God's eter-  
 nity, is a sure ground of Trust and Con-  
 fidence, of hope and cheerfulness; to good  
 Men at all times; seeing his protection  
 may be relied on and depended upon for  
 ever. This is the excellency described by  
 the Psalmist, *Pf. xc. 1. Lord, thou hast*  
*been our Refuge from one generation to*  
*another; Before the Mountains were*  
*brought forth, or ever the Earth and the*  
*World were made, thou art God from e-*  
 verlasting,



S E R M. *verlasting, and World without End. His*

IV. Power, his Goodness, his Mercy, and other Perfections, are all eternal and unchangeable as his Being. On This Security, the mind of man (after a Life of Virtue) may rely with full Satisfaction; and they who love righteousness, will be joyful therein. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah, is everlasting Strength, Is. xxvi. 4. and Deut. xxxiii. 26. There is none like the God of Jesurun; who rideth upon the Heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the Sky: The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms; and he shall thrust out the Enemy from before thee.* The same Argument is made use of likewise by the Apostle, with regard to the Intercession and Mediation of Christ; Heb. vii. 25. *He is able to save Them to the uttermost, that come unto God, by him, seeing, he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Other security there is nowhere to be found; nor any thing that can afford sufficient comfort and support, in the days of adversity and trouble. The Power of Men will fail, and their Friendship

ship is fallible and uncertain. The *Pleasures* of Life are short; and the time will come, when there shall be no relish in them. At least, *Death* puts an end to all the injoyments, and all the hopes of this present Life. And therefore a Wise man will above all things indeavour, to secure to himself the Favour of Him who liveth for ever; who alone can unloose the Bands, even of Death itself; and crown him with Immortality, and eternal Life. *Hearken unto Me*, saith the Prophet, *ye that know righteousness; the people, in whose heart is my Law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their reviling. For the Moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool. But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation, Is. li. 7, 8. And ch. ii. 22. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his Nostrils; (whose Life depends on so small a thing as a Breath;) For wherein is he accounted of? The Psalmist in like mannet, Ps. cxlvi. 2. O put not your trust in Princes, nor in any Child of man; for there is no help in them.*

SERM. For when the Breath of Man goeth forth,  
 IV. he shall turn again to his earth, and  
 then all his thoughts perish. Blessed is he,  
 that hath the God of Jacob for his help,  
 and whose Hope is in the Lord his God.

4thly. THE Consideration of This di-  
 vine Perfection, the Eternity of God, is  
 a ground for frail and mortal man to  
 hope for Pity and Compassion from him.  
 This is the Use the Prophet *Isaiab* makes  
 of this Meditation, *ch. lvii. 16.* I will  
 not contend for ever, neither will I be al-  
 ways wroth: For the Spirit should fail  
 before me, and the Souls which I have  
 made. The Psalmist likewise, *Pf. cii. 24.*  
 I said, O my God, take me not away in  
 the midst of my Days; Thy years are  
 throughout all Generations. And *Pf. cvii.*  
 13. Like as a Father pitieth his children,  
 so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;  
 For he knoweth our Frame, he remembreth  
 that we are but dust. As for man, his  
 days are grass; as a flower of the Field,  
 so he flourisheth: For the wind passeth over  
 it, and it is gone; and the place thereof  
 shall know it no more. But the mercy of  
 the Lord, is from everlasting to everlast-  
 ing,



ing, upon them that fear him; and his S E R M.  
 righteousness unto childrens children. IV.

5thly. THE Consideration of God's being eternal, leads us to a right Knowledge and just sense of the Excellency of that Reward, wherewith he will finally crown those who obey his Commandments. The Greatness of which Reward consists principally in This, that it is an Inheritance which fadeth not away, eternal in the Heavens. This is a Reward, worthy of Him to bestow, whose Kingdom ruleth over all; and which He alone is capable of bestowing, who Himself liveth and reigneth for ever. Behold I come quickly, says our Lord, invested with his Father's Power and Eternal Dominion; (in the glory of his Father, as 'tis expressed, Matt. xvi. 27;) behold, (saith he,) I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give every man according as his Work shall be, Rev. xxii. 12. The reason is annexed, v. 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. God who liveth for ever, hath promised to reward his Servants eternally; And therefore most elegantly

S E R M. elegantly follows in the next verse That

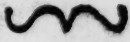
IV. affectionate exclamation, v. 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life.* God is eternal, by Necessity of Nature: But *Man's* immortality, is of free Grace. This therefore his dependent Immortality, or his Possibility of attaining to be Immortal was excellently represented *at first* by that Figure of *the Tree of Life* growing in Paradise; And his condemnation to *Mortality*, by his exclusion from the Benefit of that Tree. And his *restoration* to Immortality again by the Will of God, is no less properly described, by his being again admitted to the Tree of Life; Rev. ii. 7. *To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*

Lastly; IF God is *Eternal*, this consideration ought to be matter of infinite Terror to all impenitent and incorrigible Sinners; that he who liveth for ever, as he will reward his Servants *eternally*, so he can *punish his Enemies as long as he pleases*; for there is no End of his Power.

This

## Of the Eternity of GOD.

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This Argument is excellently urged by S E R M. the Apostle, *Heb. x. 31. It is a fearful* IV. *thing to fall into the hands of the Living*  *God; to fall under the final Displeasure of Him, who liveth for ever, and can make his Punishments as durable as he thinks fit. The same consideration is likewise laid before us by our Saviour, Matt. x. 28. Fear not them that kill the Body, and after That have no more that they can do; But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, who after he has killed, can destroy both Soul and Body in Hell; yea I say unto you, Fear him. The Particulars of This Punishment, are best set forth in the words of Scripture; in those words, which God himself has thought most proper to work upon our Fear, in such manner as it ought to be worked upon. St. Mar. ix. 44. It is, The Worm that dieth not, and the Fire that is not quenched. Rev. xx. 10. It is, The lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Devil and the false Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And ch. xiv. 11. The smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they*  
have



SERMON. *have no rest day nor night.* What the  
 IV. full purport and literal meaning of these  
 figurative expressions is, we do not perfectly know. But thus much is evident, that they signify the greatest Severity of Punishment, which the Justice and Wisdom and Goodness of Him who has infinite and eternal Power, *can* think fit to inflict. *From which Wrath to come, the Gospel exhorts us to flee; and from which, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.*



SERMON



# S E R M O N V.

*Of the SPIRITUALITY of  
G O D.*



J O H. iv. 24.

*God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.*



THESE Words are part of our S E R M. Saviour's Discourse, with the V. Woman of *Samaria*; for the sake of making which Discourse to *Her*, and of the consequent opportunity *That* gave him to instruct the rest of her City, he seems to have taken his Journey on purpose into *That*

SERM.

V.

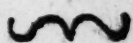
That Country. For when the Disciples, during the Time of his being imployed in This Work, would have interrupted him by desiring him to take somewhat to eat; he replied unto them, *ver. 34. My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* After which he adds immediately in the very next Words, *ver. 35. Say ye not, there are yet four Months, and then cometh Harvest. Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your Eyes, and look on the Fields, for they are white already to harvest.* Which Words, being a *Similitude* only, without the interpretation, and their connexion being somewhat difficult; they deserve briefly to be explained by the way. The true Sense of them depends, upon what the Evangelist had before related, *ver. 30.* that a great number of the *Samaritans*, upon the Woman's report, were coming out of the City to see Jesus. Whom when Jesus beheld at a distance, coming towards him; he shows them to his Disciples, and says; *The Husbandman supports himself under the Labour of his imployment, with a distant hope of Harvest after four months to come: But behold,*



behold, our Harvest is at hand, and ready to be reaped: meaning the Samaritans, who were ready to receive his Doctrine; and whom upon That account he here compares, as he usually does all well-disposed Persons in the whole course of his Preaching, to good Wheat. And that This Passage, which would otherwise be very obscure, ought to be understood in this figurative sense, which thus makes it very easy and intelligible; appears likewise further, from the very next words, ver. 36.

And he that reapeth receiveth Wages, and gathereth Fruit unto Life eternal; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. The words, Fruit unto Life eternal, show evidently what Harvest it is he was speaking of. But to return to the more immediate occasion of the words of the Text. Our Saviour, in his Discourse with the Samaritan woman, having proved himself to her to be a Prophet, by discovering to her that he knew all the most secret actions of her Life; she immediately, as was natural to an inquisitive person, asks his Opinion concerning that great Question between the Jews and the

Sama-

S E R M.  
V.  


SERM. *Samaritans*, which of the Two professed the truer Religion, *ver. 20.* To This, our Saviour gives her a twofold Answer. First, that the *Jewish*, and not the *Samaritan*, was the true Religion, *ver. 22.* for that in *Jerusalem* God had chosen to place his name; and, in matters of Religion, the Command of *God* only, and not the Institutions of *Men*, are the Rule of Right. But then Secondly he tells her in the next place, that neither the one nor the other of these Religions were to continue long, but that Both of them were quickly to give place to the more excellent and spiritual Institution of the Gospel: *ver. 21, 23, 24.* *The Hour cometh*, says he, *when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; But—the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; For the Father seeketh such to worship him: God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* In the following Discourse upon which Words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> endeavour to explain, *what* is meant by *God's* being a *Spirit*; or *how* we are to understand That Attribute

Of the Spirituality of GOD.

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bute of the divine Nature, which we call S E R M.  
his *Spirituality*: And 2dly I shall con- V.  
sider *what* our consequent *Duty* is, of   
*worshipping* him accordingly *in Spirit and*  
*in Truth.*

I. I am to endeavour to explain, *what*  
is meant by God's being a *Spirit*; or *how*  
we are to understand that Attribute of the  
divine Nature, which we call his *Spiri-*  
*tuality*. And here 'tis to be observed, that  
the Scripture, as it does not much insist  
upon *proving* to us the *Being* of God, but  
rather always *supposes That to be already*  
*known* by the Light of Nature; so also,  
when it mentions any of the *natural* Attri-  
butes of the Divine Essence, it does not  
usually inlarge either upon the Proof or  
Explication of them, but generally makes  
mention of them *occasionally* only, and as  
presupposing them beforehand well known  
by mens Reason. Wherefore tho' the  
Scripture no where expressly styles God a  
Spirit, but in this one single passage only;  
yet since in numberless places it does by  
*consequence* suppose him to be so, and  
founds our *Duty* to him often upon That  
Supposition; 'tis very reasonable for us to

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inquire,



SERM. inquire, so far as our Faculties enable us;  
 V. into the True Notion of so excellent an  
 Attribute of the divine Nature. And

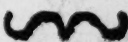
1st, THE *first and lowest particular* that is included in the Notion of God's being a *Spirit*, is, that we are to conceive of him as of a Being infinitely removed from all those gross Properties, which constitute the Nature of *Matter* or *Body*. Thus, for Instance, the nature of *Matter* or *Body*, is, that it is *Tangible*, and may be felt, or discerned by the Touch; which a *Spirit* cannot be: This Distinction our Saviour takes notice of, *Luk. xxiv. 39. Handle me, and see; for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have.*

THE Nature of *Matter* is, to be *Divisible* into *Parts*, and to have its Frame *dissolved*; which a *Spirit* cannot be: This also is taken notice of by our Saviour, *Mat. x. 28. Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.*

THE Nature of *Matter* is, to be *Visible* to the *Eyes*: But a *Spirit*, is absolutely *Invisible*.

THE Nature of *Matter* is, to be *passive* only, or act *only by necessity*, that is, (properly

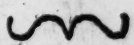


perly speaking) not to *act at all*, but only *to be acted upon*: But a *Spirit*, is in its nature a *Living, Intelligent, Active* Being. S E R M.  
V.  


AND This is the *first and lowest particular*, included in the Notion of God's being a Spirit.

2dly, BY the Scripture's affirming God to be a *Spirit*, we are directed to conceive of him, as of a Being not limited by *human shape*, or included under any *other Form* whatsoever. In the darker and more ignorant Ages of the Church, there was a sect of men, who received their denomination from the Notion they had, that God was to be understood as having *really a Human Form*. Yet perhaps it was not their intention to set up a particular Sect, but might possibly be merely an effect of their *Ignorance* and *want of Learning*, or of their *inability* only to *express* themselves properly. Or perhaps, more probably, it was nothing more, but that other *people* misunderstood their manner of expressing themselves, and ascribed to them an opinion which they meant not to maintain. However That be, it is certain that there are None *Now* so ignorant, (who are arrived at years of any Understanding,) as

S E R M. to think that God has *really* a *human* or  
 V. any *other Shape*. Yet because in expres-  
 sing the several *Powers* of God, and his  
 different *manners* of acting, all language  
 is so deficient, that we are forced to make  
 use of figurative ways of speaking, and  
 of similitudes drawn from *our own* man-  
 ners of acting, to represent our concepi-  
 tions of *these* divine Powers, to which the  
 Faculties of Man bear but a very small  
 and imperfect Analogy; it is therefore very  
 necessary, for preventing mistakes in this  
 matter, that we attend with some Care to  
 the true Meaning of those many passages  
 in Scripture, which, in condescension to  
 the Vulgar, do speak concerning God af-  
 ter this figurative manner. For Example;  
 When the Scripture, speaking of Him,  
 who, being an infinite Mind, is therefore  
 really present in every place alike, yet re-  
 presents him as *being in Heaven*, as *dwel-*  
*ling* or *sitting* there, and having the *Earth*  
 for his footstool; This ought to be un-  
 derstood only as a Description of his Su-  
 preme *Authority and Dominion over all*.  
 When mention is made of the *Eyes*, of  
 Him who has *no* Parts; This must be un-  
 derstood of his perfect *Knowledge* and  
*Dis-*



*Discernment* of all things; who, having made the Eye, cannot but have in himself That Power in a much perfecter and higher manner, of which the Eye made by him is only an Instrument proportionate to the other short Faculties of weak and finite Creatures. His *looking down* upon the Earth, signifies, not any *Posture*, (which is the Property of *Bodies* only,) but his *watchful Providence* and *continual Inspection* over all Events. When mention is made of his *Ear*, and of his *bowing down his ear* towards men; This sets forth to us his Willingness and Readiness to be moved by the Prayers of his Servants; which Prayers, he, who made the Ear, knows and understands by the same perfect Power, by which he discerns the *Heart* as well as the *Mouth*; which Power nevertheless, we, thro' defect of language, can no otherwise express, than by saying that he *bears us*. *Arms* and *Hands*, being in *Men* the instruments of Action, and the Seat of Strength; signify, when applied to God, his *Power and Might*. *Smelling a sweet savour*, is nothing but a *Hebrew phrase*, drawn from the Law of



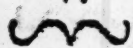
SERM. Sacrifices, to express God's *Acceptance* of  
 V. the Services of his sincere Worshippers.

~ And the mention of his *Mouth* or *Lips*, so frequently found in Scripture, is evidently nothing else but a familiar Metaphor, to signify his *Revealing*, in what manner soever it be, *his Will* to his Servants. Indeed, such figurative ways of speaking, as these, are so common in all languages, and so well understood upon numberless occasions even in common Speech, that the bare mention of them is sufficient to prevent their being mistaken, even by the meanest Capacities. There is much *greater* Difficulty, in explaining *those* passages of the *old* Testament, wherein God is represented as *appearing visibly*, and as it were *face to face*, to Holy men of old; when yet both in the *nature of Things*, 'tis certain that the Essence of a pure Spirit is absolutely impossible to be seen; and moreover in *Scripture* the God and Father of all, is peculiarly distinguished by that particular Attribute, that he is the *Invisible God*, whom *no man has seen at any time*, whom *no man hath seen nor can see*, and of whom our Saviour affirms to  
 the

the Jews, that they had neither seen his *SERM.*  
 shape nor heard his voice, Joh. v. 37. Con- *V.*  
 cerning the appearance therefore of God   
 in the old Testament, 'tis observeable that  
*generally and for the greater part*, in or-  
 der to prevent mistakes, and that men  
 might not imagine it was God himself that  
 appeared, but only a Glory to represent  
 his appearance; there was no particular  
 Shape or Form, seen in that Glory. Thus  
 to Moses at the burning Bush, there seems  
 to have been the appearance *only of Fire*;  
 To the whole people of *Israel* in the Wil-  
 derness, the glory of the Lord that ap-  
 peared in the tabernacle of the congrega-  
 tion and upon the Mount, was the ap-  
 pearance *only of a cloud and Fire*; and  
 therefore Moses exhorts them, Deut. iv. 15.  
*Take good heed unto yourselves, lest you*  
*make a graven image, the similitude of any*  
*figure; for ye saw no manner of similitude*  
*on the day that the Lord spake unto you in*  
*Horeb, out of the midst of the fire:* To  
 Moses, desiring to see the Face of God, it  
 was denied as a request impossible to be  
 granted, *Exod. xxxiii. 20.* To Abraham,  
 the word of the Lord seems to have come

SERM.

V.



most frequently without *any* visible appearance at all: And in the *Temple* between the Cherubims, which was the Seat wherein he had placed his Name, and the Throne where he would receive the Worship and Homage of his people; there never was any other appearance but of a *Cloud and Fire*. This (I say) was *generally and most usually* the Case, of the appearances of God under the old Testament. But yet, because it *sometimes* was plainly otherwise; and the Lord, that appeared, is in some *places* undeniably represented as under a human shape; As when *Adam* heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Gen. iii. 8; And *Abraham* talked with the Lord, as with one of the three *men*, whom he saw going towards *Sodom*, Gen. xviii; And of *Moses* it is related, *Exod.* xxxiii. 11. *That the Lord spake unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his Friend*; And of the Elders of *Israel*, *Exod.* xxiv. 10. *that they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved-work of Sapphire-stone, and as it were the Body of Heaven in its clearness*; And the Prophets, *Micaiah,*



*Micaiah, Isaiab, and Daniel, saw in their Visions the Lord sitting upon his Throne, and all the host of Heaven standing about him, on his right hand and on his left:* SERM.  
V.  
For the full explication therefore of this matter, and the clear reconciling These Texts of Scripture with other express Texts and with the Reason of Things, which do both of them undeniably prove that the Essence of the God and Father of all, cannot but be *absolutely invisible*; 'tis here further to be observed, that all these appearances of God in the old Testament, wherein he seems to have been represented as in a human Form; and all those other appearances also, wherein there was seen only a Glory; were in reality no other than the *Angel of the Covenant*, even *Christ himself*; who from the Beginning appeared in a bodily Glory, having (as St. Paul expresses it) *the Form of God*, and being the visible *Image of the Invisible God*, representing the Supreme Majesty of the Father, and acting in his Name and as his Word. Thus St. Stephen expressly, *Acts vii. 30. There appeared to Moses in the Wilderness, the Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a Bush; The Angel of the Lord,*

SERM. Lord, that is, the *Angel of his Presence*,  
 V. *the great Messenger of his Covenant*; as  
 our Saviour is stiled, *Mal. iii. 1. and Gal.*  
*iv. 14.* And This, 'tis very probable, was  
 not altogether unknown to those eminent  
 Prophets under the old Testament, to  
 whom God was pleased to reveal himself  
 more distinctly; that the person who ap-  
 peared to *Adam* in Paradise, was that *second*  
*Adam* who is the *Lord from Heaven*; that  
 the Lord who talked familiarly with *Abra-*  
*ham*, was He *whose day Abraham earnestly*  
*desired to see, and he saw it and was glad,*  
*Joh. viii. 56.* and that the Lord who spake  
*to Moses face to face, as a Man talketh*  
*with his friend,* was He in whom at length  
 was fulfilled the Law and the Prophets,  
 by whom was revealed openly *Grace and*  
*Truth,* *Joh. i. 17.*

3dly, As by God's being a Spirit, is  
*meant* that he has no human or other  
 bodily shape; so thereby is not *meant*,  
 that he is such a Spirit as are the Souls of  
 Men. For the word, *Spirit*, does not  
 signify, as the word, *Body*, does; *one on-*  
*ly determinate sort or kind of Beings*;  
 But, thro' the defect of Language, and  
 also for want of more distinct Notions,

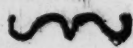
we

we by one common Name call *every Being a Spirit*, which is *not Body*; tho' probably some of those Intelligent Natures we call Spirits, are as much superior to, and different from, other Spirits, as those others are different from Matter or Body. When therefore we affirm *God* to be a *Spirit*, we must not thereby mean only to distinguish him from *Bodily Substance*; but, in like manner as our Soul, by very great Proportion excels the Body, in the superiour Powers of Life, Understanding, Knowledge, Activity, and the like; so we must conceive of *Him*, as of a Being excelling in an infinitely higher proportion, not only the *Souls of Men*, but also all *other Intellectual Natures* or Spirits whatsoever.

4thly and *Lastly*, WHEN we affirm that *God* is a *Spirit*, we must thereby understand that he is *absolutely and perfectly such*; that is, that he is wholly void of all those Passions, Affections, and Commotions, such as Love, Hatred, Anger, Grief, Repentance, and the like, which are the Properties of embodied *Spirits*: And that He, determining all his Actions, with in-  
finite

SERM.

V.





SERM. finite Calmness and undisturbed Serenity  
 V. in Himself, according to the Rules of perfect Right and unerring Reason; has these Passions of *Mind* ascribed to him in Scripture, only after the same figurative manner of speaking as the Sensitive Organs of the *Body* likewise are; because thereby to *Us* are best represented such Actions of *His*, as in their *Effect* upon other things, not in their *nature* within Him, bear some Analogy to the like Passions or Affections in *Us*.

HAVING thus at large explained, *what* is meant by God's being a *Spirit*; or *how* we are to understand That Attribute of the divine Nature, which we call his *Spirituality*: It remains that I proceed now in the

II<sup>d</sup> place to consider, *what* our consequent *Duty* is, of *worshipping* him accordingly *in Spirit and in Truth*. And This phrase plainly signifies, worshipping him with the real Substantial Worship of the *Heart and Mind*, in opposition to mere *ceremonial and external Forms*; worshipping him in a *Manner*, worthy of God; with the inward sincere Devotion of the  
*Soul*

*Soul and Affections*, evidencing itself in S E R M.  
the whole Life and Conversation by the V.  
true and acceptable Fruits of *Obedience and*  
*Imitation*. This is worshipping God in  
*Spirit and in Truth*. But more particu-  
larly; The full and distinct Meaning of  
this Phrase, will best be understood, by  
considering what are in Scripture the *con-*  
*trary* Characters, to which *Spirit and*  
*Truth* are set in opposition. Now *Spirit*  
is sometimes opposed *literally* to the *Body*,  
and sometimes 'tis opposed *figuratively* to  
*Fleshy or Carnal Ordinances*. *Truth* al-  
so in like manner is opposed sometimes  
*literally* to *Falshood*, and sometimes *fi-*  
*guratively* to *Types or Shadows*. Conse-  
quently *worshipping God* in *Spirit*, when  
'tis opposed to worshipping him with the  
*Body* only, signifies *Sincerity*, as opposed  
to *Hypocrisy*; and when 'tis opposed to  
*Flesh* or carnal *Ordinances*, then it signifies  
*Morality* or *real Holiness*, in opposition to  
*ritual* or *ceremonial* performances. In like  
manner; *worshipping God* in *Truth*, when  
'tis opposed to *False Worship*, signifies  
worshipping him according to the rules  
of the true *Religion*, in opposition to *Ido-*  
*latry*;

SERM.

V.



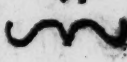
latry; and when 'tis opposed to *Types or Figures*, then *Truth* likewise signifies, as *Spirit* did before, *Morality* or *real Holiness*, in opposition to *ritual* or *ceremonial* performances. This precept therefore, of worshipping God in *Spirit and in Truth*, is transgressed, 1<sup>st</sup>, by all *Idolaters*, who are guilty of *False* worship, in opposition to the *Truth*; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, by all those, who placing the chief of Religion in *external Forms and Ceremonies*, which may be performed without True Virtue, worship God (as the Scripture expresses it) in the *Flesh* and not in the *Spirit*.

I. THEY are guilty of transgressing this Precept in the highest and *most* presumptuous manner, who set up *False and Idolatrous* worship, in opposition to the *Truth*. By *Idolatry*, in this place, I understand, not the Worship of *False Gods*; (For *That*, is not only not worshipping God in *Spirit and in Truth*, but indeed *not worshipping him* at all;) But, by *Idolatry*, in this place, I would be understood to mean, worshipping the True God in an *Idolatrous* manner, and by *False Mediums* of Worship; in opposition to what  
our



## Of the Spirituality of GOD.

III

our Saviour calls (in the words before the SERM.  
V.  
  
Text) *the True worshippers Worshipping him in Truth.* Now This sort of False worship, is That which those *Heathens* are charged with, *Rom. i. 21.* who *when they knew God, yet glorified him not as God, ----- but became vain in their imaginations, ----- and changed the Glory of the uncorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to Birds and four-footed Beasts and creeping things.* And the *Jews* were still more *inexcusably* guilty of it, when in the wilderness they worshipped the Golden Calf, most absurdly, as an Emblem or representation of the God of Heaven; and in *Jerusalem* itself, when they set up *high places*, not in opposition indeed to the *True God*, but in opposition to the *Temple*, in opposition to that *Place* of worship, which he *Himself* had chosen to place his Name there. And when in *Dan and Bethel* they set up Calves, not indeed as False Gods, like the *Worshippers of Baal*; but as false and absurd representations of the God of *Israel.* And the *Samaritans*, *2 Kings xvii. 24.* when they worshipped God, not as  
the

S E R M. the Supreme Lord of all things, but as  
 V. *the God of the Land*, the God of That  
 particular Country. And corrupt Christians, still the *most inexcusably of all*; when, notwithstanding so many repeated Declarations of the Will of God to the contrary, they yet continue to worship him thro' *False Mediators*, thro' the pretended Intercession of Saints and Angels and of the Blessed Virgin, whom he hath *not* appointed to any such Office: And when moreover, by introducing *Images*, not only of Christ, but even of God himself, they totally destroy the Spiritual Purity of the Gospel-worship.

Now the *reasons why* this *particular Species of Idolatry*, this worshipping the *True God* under *False Images*, is so severely condemned in Scripture; are principally these Two.

*First*, BECAUSE it tends to subvert the Great and Primary Foundation of all Religion, by giving men *mean and unworthy Notions of God*, confining his Presence, and falsely supposing that there can be any such Thing as a Similitude or Representation of him. Forasmuch (saith the Apostle)

## Of the Spirituality of GOD.

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postle) *as we are the off-spring of God,* SERM.  
V.  
(forasmuch as even *we ourselves* are rational Beings, and our Minds far superior to any corporeal representation,) *we ought not* (saith he) *to think that the Godhead is like unto* (that is, can in any manner be represented by,) *Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art and Man's device,* Acts xvii. 29. The Heathens, knowing that God was every where present, *first* worshipped him in *the Sun and Stars*, as the most illustrious Instruments, of his Power, and the best Visible Representations, of his glorious Greatness and Goodness. *Then* they soon fell, to worship the *Sun and Stars* themselves, instead of the God who *made* those bright Luminaries, and whom they supposed to be *in them*. And from thence by degrees they descended, to worship the meanest plant, and at last Wood and Stone, even the workmanship of their own hands. The *Jews* in like manner, I wish it could not be said that *Christians* also, from beginning to make imaginary representations of God, quickly fell by degrees from more refined Idolatry, to worshipping at last, in the most stupid manner, even

VOL. I.

I

Stocks



S E R M. Stocks and Stones. This being in the  
 V. highest degree contrary to the Precept of  
 worshipping God according to *Truth*, 'tis  
 with great Elegancy and just Sharpness of  
 Reproof, that, in the old Testament, I-

Jer. x. 14. dols are frequently stiled *Falshood*, and  
 Am. ii. 4. *Lies*, and *Lying Vanities*; and the Makers  
 Jon. ii. 8. thereof, *Teachers of Lies*; and in the  
 Hab. ii. 18. New Testament likewise, *Idolaters* are

called, by way of Eminence, *Liars*, Rev.  
 xxi. 8. and *whosoever loveth or maketh a*  
*Lye*, ch. xxi. 27. xxii. 15; and that they  
*turn the Truth of God into a Lye*, Rom. i. 25.

To prevent so great a corruption of the  
 first Principles of Religion in the Notion  
 of a Deity, the second Commandment is  
 delivered in larger and more explicit  
 Terms, than any of the rest: *Thou shalt*  
*not make to thyself any graven Image, nor*  
*the Likeness of any thing that is in Heaven*  
*above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the*  
*Waters under the Earth*; that is, Thou  
 shalt not think so meanly and unworthily  
 of God, as to imagine that He who made  
 all things, can be represented by any Si-  
 militude of the things that are made.  
 And 'tis with great elegancy of expression,  
 that

## Of the Spirituality of G O D.

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that the Prophet *Isaiab* derides the Ma-S E R M.  
kers of Images, *ch. xl. 18.* *To whom will* V.  
*ye liken God, or what likeness will ye com-*  
*pare unto him? The workman melteth a*  
*graven Image, and the goldsmith spreadeth*  
*it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.*

2dly, The other reason, why This Ido-  
latry is so severely condemned in Scri-  
pture, is because it always tends to *cor-*  
*rupt mens Manners,* and to introduce all  
fort of Wickedness. *St. Paul,* in his whole  
*first chapter to the Romans,* largely shows,  
how the *Heathens,* when *they changed the*  
*Truth of God into a Lye,* were consequent-  
ly *given up unto vile affections among them-*  
*selves;* and their own Histories show,  
that, departing from the natural Notion  
of God, they came at length even to *hu-* Tantum  
*man Sacrifices,* and such other Cruelties, religio  
as no other principle, how corrupt soever, *posuit su-*  
but only This of *Idolatrous Superstition,* *adere ma-*  
could have led men to. The *Jews* in like *lorum.*  
manner, whenever they fell into Idolatry,  
their whole History shows, how it totally  
destroy'd all Sense of Virtue out of their  
minds, and they came at last to *sacrifice*  
*even their own children to Moloch.* And

SERM. V.  sad it is to observe, how *Christian Idolatry* also has had the same Effect; causing men to rely on *Saints*, and even on the *Relicks* of *Saints*, instead of the practice of Righteousness and true Virtue; and teaching them, instead of Christian Charity and universal Love and Good-will towards all men, to be on the contrary guilty of such *inhuman Cruelties*, as men could never have thought of, who had never heard of any Religion at all.

THUS the Precept in the Text, of *worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth*, is transgressed in the First and Highest manner, by the *Practise of Idolatry*.

Idly, It is in the Next place transgressed by those, who place the chief of Religion in *external Forms and Ceremonies*. But of This, hereafter.





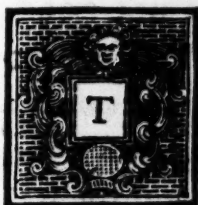
# S E R M O N VI.

*Of the SPIRITUALITY of  
G O D.*



J O H. iv. 24.

*God is a Spirit, and they that wor-  
ship him, must worship him in  
Spirit and in Truth.*

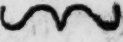


THE Nature and Manner of S E R M.  
the Worship we are to pay VI.  
to God, depends upon the  
consideration of the *Nature*  
of Man, who is to pay that  
Worship ; of the *Nature* of God, to  
whom the Worship is to be paid ; and of  
the Will of God, which is the Rule and

SERM. Measure of our Obedience, when we con-

VI. sider him as our Governor, our Lord, and  
 our Judge. The *Nature of Man* is, that  
 he is a *reasonable and intelligent Creature* ;  
 and therefore the Worship *he* is to pay to  
 God, must be a *reasonable and intelligent*  
 Worship. The *Nature of God* is, that  
 he is a *spiritual Being, infinitely perfect* ;  
 and therefore the only Worship *he* can de-  
 light to receive, is that *spiritual worship*  
 which proceeds from the Heart and Affect-  
 ions, from a *sincere Mind* and from a  
*righteous Intention*. The Will of God, as  
 revealed in Scripture, is only a Confirma-  
 tion and Illustration of the *Precepts of*  
*Nature*, with greater Clearness and with  
 stronger Authority ; excepting only, that  
 in condescension to the *Infirmity of the*  
*Jews*, He gave *them* for a Time, Pre-  
 cepts which in themselves were not good,  
 but suited to the then present Circum-  
 stances of that people ; and, in conde-  
 scension to the *Necessities of Christians*,  
 he has appointed *us* Two Sacramental  
 Rites, not as in Themselves essential to  
 Religion, but as *external Helps* to bind  
 stronger upon us the Obligation of those  
 Moral

Moral Duties wherein the essence of Religion truly consists, and as *instituted Means* of conveying and applying to good men in this imperfect State, and upon true Repentance, the requisite Benefit of a Saviour. These *latter*, the Institutions given to *Christians*, are indeed of *perpetual* obligation; because the Duties, to which these outward Rites are our solemn obligation, are themselves of Necessity eternal: Yet has the Scripture taken exceeding great care to instruct us, that not in the performance of these outward Rites, but in those Spiritual Duties of Righteousness Justice, Charity and Holiness, to which the outward Rites are but Helps and Obligations, does the Life and Spirit of true Religion consist. The *former*, viz. the Institutions given to the *Jews*, were declared not only to be inferior to the Duties of Morality, and wholly subordinate to them; but moreover that they were also of temporary *appointment* only, suited to the present Infirmities of that people, and to give place in due time to a more spiritual and more acceptable Form of Worship. The Time

S E R M.  
VI.  




SERM. of establishing which better Religion, being then just accomplished, when our Saviour spake the words of the Text; 'tis evident they are to be understood as a *Reason* given, from the Attributes of God and from the Nature of Things, *why* the Spiritual Religion of the Gospel, which consists in the practise of Universal Righteousness, Charity, Holiness and Truth, should be more acceptable to God, than the *ceremonious* performances of the *Jewish* Law, or any *outward* Devotions of *Christian* Hypocrisy. God, says he, *is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* In a Foregoing Discourse upon which words, I proposed 1<sup>st</sup> to explain, *what* is meant by God's being a *Spirit*; or *how* we are to understand That Attribute of the Divine Nature, which we call his *Spirituality*; And 2<sup>dly</sup> to consider, *what* our consequent *Duty* is, of worshipping him accordingly *in Spirit and in Truth.* In explication of the *Former* of These, *what* is meant by God's being a *Spirit*; or *how* we are to understand That Attribute of the Divine Nature, which we call his *Spirituality*;

## Of the Spirituality of GOD.

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rituality; I have shown, 1<sup>st</sup>, That the S E R M.  
*first and lowest particular* included in the VI.  
Notion of God's being a *Spirit*, is that  
we are to conceive of him as of a Being  
infinitely removed from all those gross  
Properties, which constitute the Nature  
of *Matter* or *Body*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That by the  
Scripture's affirming God to be a *Spirit*,  
we are directed to conceive of him, as of  
a Being not limited by *human Shape*, or  
included under any *other Form* whatsoe-  
ver. 3<sup>dly</sup>, That since the word, *Spirit*,  
does not signify, as the word, *Body*, does,  
*one* only determinate *Sort* or *Kind* of Be-  
ings; but, on the contrary, Every *kind*  
of Beings, which are *not Body*; therefore  
we must not hereby mean only to distin-  
guish God from *Bodily Substance*; but,  
in like manner as our Soul by very great  
Proportion excells the Body, so we must  
conceive of *Him*, as excelling, in an in-  
finitely higher Proportion, not only the  
Souls of Men, but also all *other* intel-  
lectual Natures or Spirits whatsoever.  
4<sup>thly</sup> and lastly, that when we affirm  
God to be a *Spirit*, we must thereby un-  
derstand that he is in all respects *absolute-*  
*ly*,

SERM. *ly and perfectly* Such; that is to say, that  
 VI. he is wholly void of all those Passions,  
 Affections and Commotions, such as Love, Hatred, Anger, Grief, Repentance, and the like, which are the properties of *embodied Spirits*; and that therefore all these things are ascribed to him in Scripture *figuratively* only, and not *literally*. As to the *Second* general Head, *what* our consequent *Duty* is, of worshipping him accordingly *in Spirit and in Truth*; I have shown that it consists, in worshipping him *1st* with *True* worship, after such a *manner* as is worthy of God and suitable to his Nature, in opposition to all *false* or *idolatrous* worship; and *2dly*, That it consists in worshipping him with *Spiritual* worship, That of the Heart and Mind and morally virtuous Actions, in opposition to merely *ritual and ceremonial Forms*: And that therefore the Precept in the Text is principally transgressed, *1st* by all *Idolaters*, who are guilty of *False* Worship in opposition to the *Truth*; and *2dly* by all those, who placing the chief of their Religion in *external Forms and Ceremonies*, worship God (as the Scrip-

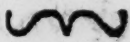


ture expresse it) in the *Flesh* and not in S E R M.  
the *Spirit*. The *former* of these, I in- VI.  
larged upon in my last Discourse, and   
showed how Idolatrous or *False* worship,  
in opposition to the *Truth*, tends 1<sup>st</sup> to  
subvert the Great and Primary Foundati-  
on of all Religion, by giving men *mean*  
*and unworthy Notions of God*; and 2<sup>dly</sup>  
how it tends to *corrupt mens manners* in  
*other* respects, and to introduce all sorts  
of Wickedness. It remains that I proceed  
Now, to consider,

II. IN the *Next* place, how *all* They are  
likewise guilty of transgressing the Precept  
in the Text, who (though they are *not* indeed  
guilty of *False* worship, yet) placing the  
chief of their Religion in *outward Forms*  
*and Ceremonies*, worship God, that is, wor-  
ship the True God, in the *Flesh* (as the  
Scripture expresse it) and not in the *Spi-*  
*rit*. God is a Being, of infinite Holi-  
ness, Justice, Righteousness, Goodness  
and Truth; and 'tis his Will and Plea-  
sure that all reasonable Creatures, accord-  
ing to their several Capacities, should  
conform themselves to his Likeness by the  
Imitation of these great and excellent  
Per-

SERM. VI. Perfections. In *This*, consists the Essence of Religion; These Dispositions of Mind, are the most excellent *Virtues* upon *Earth*: and the *Foundation of the Happiness of Heaven*. These Qualifications are the Great *End and Design*, for the *promoting* of which, all religious Institutions were intended; and no external Performances whatsoever, are any otherwise of any Value, than as *Means* to promote these Great *Ends*. When therefore Men invert this natural Order of Things, and separate the *Means* from the *End*; when they take up wholly with those external Observances, which in themselves are of no value, but only as they tend to, and promote that Substantial Virtue and Righteousness, which is finally good and intrinsically in its own Nature profitable unto men; their religion in such case, like a Shadow without a Substance, is vain; and like a Body without a Spirit, is dead. Of This great and fundamental Fault were guilty

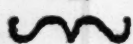
1<sup>st</sup>. THE *antient Jews*; who, mistaking the Design of their own Law, which was by *Sacrifices and Expiations*

to remind them of the Necessity of *true* S E R M.  
*Repentance and Amendment of Life*; on VI.  
the contrary, neglected the *End*, which   
was *Repentance and Amendment*; and  
contented themselves with the bare *Means*,  
which were the *ritual Observations of the*  
*Law*; being desirous that *Sacrifices and*  
*Expiations* should serve *instead of*, and  
make amends for the *want of*, That Pu-  
rity of Life and Manners, which in re-  
ality they were intended only as *Means* to  
promote; and from the Care of which,  
all *atonements and propitiations* were so  
far from discharging men, that indeed  
they were of no other Use, and designed  
for no other purpose, then to bind upon  
men more strongly their obligations to  
That *inward and real Holiness*, of which  
all *legal and external Purifications* were  
but *Types and Figures*. The not rightly  
understanding this Matter, was the great  
Error of the antient *Jews*: And an Er-  
ror of such importance it was, affecting  
even the very Essence of Religion, that  
one of the main designs of the preaching  
and writings of all the Prophets, was to  
reprove them for, and draw them off  
2 from,



SERM. from, so fatal a mistake. *Hath the Lord*  
 VI. *as great delight, says God by the Prophet*  
 Samuel, (1 Sam. xv. 22.) *Hath the Lord*  
*as great delight in burnt-offerings and Sa-*  
*crifices, as in obeying the voice of the*  
*Lord? Behold, to obey, is better than Sa-*  
*crifice, and to hearken than the Fat of*  
*Rams. By the Prophet David, Ps. l. 13.*  
*Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the*  
*Blood of Goats? Nay, but Offer unto God*  
*Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the*  
*most High. By the Prophet Isaiah,*  
*ch. i. 11. To what purpose is the multitude*  
*of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord;*  
*---while your hands are full of Blood, that*  
*is, of murder and unrighteous oppression:*  
*But wash ye, make you clean, put away*  
*the evil of your doings from before mine*  
*eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek*  
*judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the*  
*fatherless, plead for the widow: Other-*  
*wise, He that killeth an ox, [ch. lxvi. 3.]*  
*is as if he slew a man; and---he that*  
*burneth incense, as if he blessed an Idol.*  
*By the Prophet Amos, ch. v. 21. I hate,*  
*I despise your Feast-days, ---your burnt-*  
*offerings and your meat-offerings; ---But*  
*let*

let judgement run down as water, and S E R M.  
 righteousness as a mighty stream. Last- IV.  
 ly, by the Prophet Micah, ch. vi. 7. Will  
 the Lord be pleased with thousands of  
 Rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of  
 oyl? ——— Nay, but He hath shewed thee,  
 O man, what is good; and what doth the  
 Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and  
 to love mercy, and to walk humbly with  
 thy God? And in a passage still more re-  
 markable than all these, Jer. vii. 22. I  
 spake not unto your Fathers, nor command-  
 ed them in the day that I brought them out  
 of the land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-  
 offerings or Sacrifices; but This thing com-  
 manded I them, saying, Obey my voice.  
 There is here a considerable difficulty in  
 the expression, because it seems in the  
 English translation, as if it were a denial  
 of God's having instituted Sacrifices at  
 all; which would be a direct contradic-  
 tion to the whole History of Scripture.  
 But 'tis a very remarkable Idiom in the  
 Original, and deserves therefore to be  
 observed carefully, for the right under-  
 standing of This and many other the like  
 places; that what in modern languages is  
 always

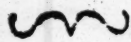
S E R M.  
VI.

always expressed in one Sentence by words comparative, the *Hebrew* usually expresses in two distinct periods, by affirming concerning *one* thing, and denying of *another*, what is intended to be only comparative between *Both*. The Sense therefore of these words, *I spake not to your Fathers concerning Sacrifices*, is; I spake not concerning *them*, as if they were of the same importance with *moral obedience*. That This is the true interpretation of the Phrase, there is an evident proof in the parallel place, *Hof. vi. 6*; where the prophet using that very same expression, *I desired mercy, and not Sacrifice*; explains it comparatively in the very next words; *and the knowledge of God*, more than *burnt-offerings*. And from This idiom of the *Hebrew* language, the same manner of speaking has been sometimes derived into the New Testament. Thus *Mat. xv. 24*. *I am not sent*, saith our Saviour, *but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel*: His meaning is not absolute, that he was *not sent at all* to any other than the *Jews* only; but that he was not sent so soon, so immediately, so  
prin-



principally; his Mission was not to be SERM.  
VI.  
made known so early, to any other Na-  
tion, as to the lost sheep of the House of  
Israel. Again, Job. xii. 44. *He that be-  
lieveth on Me, believeth not on Me, but  
on Him that sent me,* that is, not so much,  
not so properly on Me, as on Him that  
sent me. Joh. xvii. 9. *I pray not for the  
World, but for them which thou hast given  
me:* These words have sometimes been  
alleged, in proof of the absolute reprobation  
of the greatest part of mankind: But  
from what has been now said concerning  
the nature of the Jewish Language, it  
sufficiently appears that our Saviour's  
meaning, was only to pray for his Dis-  
ciples more especially, and in a more par-  
ticular manner, than for the rest of the  
World. Acts v. 4. *Thou hast not lied un-  
to Men, but unto God;* that is, not only  
unto Men, not so much to mere Men, as  
to God himself who inspired them with  
his Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. i. 17. *Christ sent  
me, not to baptize, but to preach the Go-  
spel;* that is, the Proper Office of an A-  
postle, was not so much to baptize, to  
perform the Ceremony Himself with his

S E R M. own hands, but rather to attend constantly the Work of preaching the Gospel.

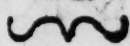
VI.  1 Cor. vi. 12. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient*: The meaning is not, that all things were alike lawful; but that all *those* things which are lawful, are not therefore consequently expedient. And, to mention but one place more, 1 Tim. ii. 14. *Adam was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived was in the transgression*: The Meaning is not that *Adam* was not deceived at all, but that *his* Deception was consequent upon the *Woman's* being deceived first, and that it was brought upon *him* by *her* means. The Apostle had said in the verse foregoing; *Adam was first formed, then Eve*: And he adds; but *Adam* was not deceived, that is, *was not first deceived*; The Deception began not at *him*, but at *her*. From all these, and from other the like passages which might be alleged, 'tis abundantly evident, that when God tells the *Jews* by the Prophet, *I spake not to your Fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or Sacrifices, but This thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice*; though the

## Of the Spirituality of GOD.

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manner of the expreffion seems *Now* unusual to *Us*, yet in the language of the *Jews at that time* it was very easy, and the meaning obvious, that hereby was not denied God's having commanded Sacrifices *at all*, but their *comparative value* only is denied, when distinguished from the Practice of moral Virtue and Righteousness.

S E R M.  
VI.



IT may here perhaps by some be inquired; if the institutions of the *Jewish Law*, were matters comparatively of so small importance; *Statutes* (as the Prophet expresses it) *which were not good, and Judgments whereby men should not live*; for *what reason* then was That Law given by divine appointment at-all? To This question, the Scripture intimates to us several Answers. In the *first* place, it was given That People, to preserve them from Idolatry; to keep them from running after the Customs of the Idolatrous Nations round about them; by employing them in the continual Service of the True God. This reason is hinted at in several places of the Law; and particularly *Deut. v. 22*, where, at the time of the



S E R M. original delivering of the *Ten Command-*  
 VI. *ments* from God to the Children of *Israel*,

'tis affirmed that *he added no more*; but after their proneness to Idolatry shown in the case of their setting up the *golden calf*, the whole ceremonial Law with all its burdensome rites was immediately in-joined them. In the *next* place, *another reason* of appointing those numerous Sacrifices and Expiations, Washings, Purifications, and the like; was to remind that Stiff-necked people, of their Obligation to Purity and true Holiness of life, by such corporeal Figures and Emblems, as might always be visibly before their Eyes; suited to their capacities, and prejudices; proper to withdraw them from the Pollutions of their neighbouring Nations; to admonish them constantly, of their being the peculiar People of the True God, the Holy One of *Israel*; and consequently to keep them under a perpetual Sense, of their obligation to be Holy even as He was Holy. *Lastly, Another reason* of God's giving the Law of *Moses*, was to be a prophetick Typifying of the Messiah to come; and *a Schoolmaster*,

## Of the Spirituality of GOD.

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(as St. Paul expresses it, Gal. iii. 24. iv. 1.) S E R M. VI.  
to bring Men unto Christ. For the Law, Joh. i. 17.  
(saith St. John,) was given by Moses, but  
Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ;  
The meaning is; The Law, was only a  
Type or Shadow of That Truth, and an  
Emblem of That Grace or Mercy of God,  
which was to be clearly and fully removed in the Gospel. And for That Reason,  
the Law was not of perpetual, but only  
of temporary institution: There is verily Heb. vii. 18. ix. 9. 10. x. 1.  
(says the Apostle) a disannulling of the  
Commandment going before, for the Weak-  
ness and Unprofitableness thereof; it being  
only a figure for the Time then present,  
— imposed upon them till the time of  
Reformation; — a Shadow of good things  
to come, and not the very Image (the Sense  
is, not the very Substance) of the things  
themselves, Heb. x. 1. The not attending  
to these Ends of the Institution of the  
Law of Moses, which yet are very plainly  
hinted in the Law itself and in the Wri-  
tings of the Prophets; was a principal  
Cause of the antient Jews falling into  
that fundamental Error, of laying greater  
stress upon the bare ritual and ceremonial  
K 3                      perfor-

SERM. VI. *performances*, than upon that *real Virtue* and *true Righteousness* whereof these outward Observances were but Types and Figures; Contrary to the perpetual Exhortations of all their own Prophets; and contrary to that great Duty inforced in the Text from *natural Reason itself*, that God, being a Spirit, ought consequently to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth.

Particu-  
larly, [ch.  
vi. 12.

2dly, THE next remarkable Example, of persons erring fundamentally from this great Rule of *worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth*, were those *Jewish Converts* among the Primitive Christians, who contended that *after* their Conversion it was still necessary to observe the *Law* together with the *Gospel*. Which opinion of theirs, was the occasion of much Controversy in the Apostles times; as may be seen at large, in the 15th chapter of the *Acts*, and in the whole Epistle to the *Galatians*. Which Controversy being Now long since at an End; it would no longer have been of any Use to *Us* to inquire into the State of it, were it not that accidentally 'tis still very necessary to the right understanding two of St. Paul's epistles,

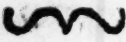


epistles, That to the *Romans*, and That S E R M. VI. to the *Galatians*; many erroneous and hurtful Doctrines in Christianity, having been occasioned by mens ignorantly applying several Phrases in those Epistles, according to the *modern* Sense of words among Christians at this day; when in reality they were by the Apostle used only according to the Signification of the words in *those* days, relating to This controversy with the *Jewish* Christians about the necessity of still retaining the *Law* of *Moses*. For against *These* mens opinions it is, that St. *Paul* argues, and *not at all* in the way of comparing one Christian virtue with another, when he earnestly in these Epistles magnifies *Faith* in opposition to the *Law*, *Grace* in opposition to *Works*, and the *Spirit* in opposition to *Flesh* or *carnal Ordinances*. Thus when he tells his converts, *Rom.* iii. 28. and *Gal.* ii. 15. iii. 2. that they are *justified* by *Faith*, *without the deeds of the Law*; and that they *received* the Holy Ghost, *not by the works of the Law, but by the Hearing of Faith*; his meaning is not, (as some in later Ages have unreasonably

S E R M. understood him,) that men are justified  
 VI. barely by *Faith* or *Believing*, as distinguished from *Virtue* or *Righteousness of Life*; but that men are justified by the Obedience of the *Gospel*, (so the word *Faith* always signifies in St. *Paul's* epistles,) and is therefore sometimes expressly called *The obedience of Faith*, Rom. xvi. 25. and *obedience to the Faith*, Rom. i. 5; and *Acts* vi. 7. they are justified (he saith) by the Obedience of the *Gospel* only, by That *Fidelity* or *Sincerity* in religion, which the *Gospel* requires, without observing the ceremonies of the *Law* of *Moses*. In like manner, when he tells them that their *Salvation* is not of *works*, but of *Grace*, Rom. xi. 5. and *Gal.* v. 4. he does not mean that God saves them without the *works of Virtue and Righteousness*; but that they are saved by the gracious *dispensation of the Gospel*, (That is always the meaning of the word, *Grace*, in these Epistles,) they are saved by the gracious *dispensation of the Gospel*, by the merciful *Terms of Repentance* declared through Christ, and not by the *ritual and rigorous Observations of the Mosaick Law*,

*Law.* Further; because one great End S E R M.  
of This Last Dispensation of the Gospel, VI.  
was to teach men to worship God with   
pure worship, *in Spirit and in Truth*,  
with all Holiness and Righteousness of  
the *Heart and Mind*; in opposition to  
*external Forms and carnal Ordinances*,  
Such as Circumcision, Bodily Washings,  
Purifications, and the like; which affect  
the *Body* only: therefore *St. Paul* fre-  
quently expresses the Gospel of Christ by  
the figurative Name of *Spirit*, and the  
Law of *Moses* by that of *Flesh*: Gal. iii.  
3. *Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the*  
*Spirit, are ye not made perfect by the*  
*Flesh?* These Phrases, which otherwise  
might seem very difficult, because diffe-  
rent from modern ways of speaking; do,  
from what has been said, appear plainly  
to signify This only, that the *Galatians*  
were worthy of reproof, for that since  
their embracing the Religion of *Christ*,  
they imagined they could still become  
*more perfect*, by continuing the practice  
of *Jewish* observances. And that This is  
his true and only meaning may be shown  
yet more evidently from the following  
parallel



SERM. parallel places; *Rom. ii. 29. Circumcision,*  
 VI. *is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not*  
 *in the letter: And ch. vii. 6. We are deli-*  
*vered from the Law; ----- that we should*  
*serve in newness of Spirit, and not in the*  
*oldness of the letter: And Phil. iii. 3, We*  
*are the circumcision, which worship God in*  
*the Spirit, ----- and have no confidence in*  
*the Flesh. Spirit, in all these places, is*  
*the spiritual worship of the Gospel; and*  
*what he here stiles Flesh, is the same as*  
*what he elsewhere calls a carnal com-*  
*mandment, Heb. vii. 16; and ch. ix. 10.*  
*carnal ordinances, namely meats and drinks*  
*and divers washings. These, where there*  
*is no true Virtue and Righteousness of*  
*Life, are the Forms of Godliness without*  
*the Power of it; the corruption, which*  
*our Saviour principally meant to reform*  
*in the words of the Text; and which*  
*St. Paul cautions against, when he de-*  
*clares, that the Kingdom of God is not*  
*meat and drink, but righteousness, and*  
*peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; Rom.*  
*xiv. 17: that we are ministers of the New*  
*Testament, not of the letter, but of the*  
*Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6: that Circumcision is*  
*nothing*

nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, SERM. VI.  
 but Faith which worketh by Love : And  
 instanceth in Abraham, Rom. iv. 3, 10.   
 that before his receiving the Seal of Cir-  
 cumcision, he believed in God, and obey-  
 ed his commandments, and it was counted  
 unto him for Righteousness : The Religion  
 of Abraham, was the same as the Spiritual  
 Religion of the Gospel ; He lived before  
 the Law, as our Saviour requires that  
 Christians should do after the law ; wor-  
 shipping God in Spirit and in Truth.

3dly. As Some among the Antient  
 Jews, and Antient Christians, were, in  
 the manner already shown, guilty of  
 transgressing this great Precept of wor-  
 shipping God in Spirit and in Truth ;  
 so among Christians of all later Ages like-  
 wise, there are Many too justly chargeable  
 with being guilty of the same Funda-  
 mental Fault in different respects. In  
 the

1st PLACE, Those of the Church of  
 Rome, do in the Highest degree transgress  
 this great Commandment of our Saviour,  
 when instead of that *Spiritual Worship*,  
 which our Lord intended to establish,  
 they

S E R M. they on the contrary fill their religion

VI. with more *rites and ceremonies*, then even the *Law of Moses itself* was burdened withal ; And (which of all other things is the most profane,) compell men by force, to make external and hypocritical Professions in matters of Religion ; which yet, they well know, if it is not seated in the Heart, is no Religion at all.

2dly. OF transgressing this precept in the Text, *those* Christians also are guilty in *All* communions, who place the chief of their religion in the *Form of Godliness*, in barely going to *Church*, and in receiving the *Sacrament*, and in such other outward Performances, which ought not indeed to be *left undone*, but which are *Then only* acceptable to God and useful to the Souls of Men, when they are Means of producing that True Holiness, Charity, and Righteousness of life, which is, in Heaven, as well as upon Earth, the eternal and unchangeable essence of Religion. Such persons as These therefore are well reproved by the Prophet *Jeremy? ch. vii. 4.* *Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord,*



## Of the Spirituality of G O D.

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*Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these; S E R M.  
But thoroughly amend your ways and your VI.  
doings; thoroughly execute judgment be-  
tween a man and his neighbour; oppress  
not the stranger, the fatherless and the  
widow.*

3dly. T H E Y also cannot be said to worship God in Spirit and in Truth, who place religion chiefly in matters of *opinion, speculation and dispute*; in Doctrines hard to understand, and of no use in practice. *Though I understand all mysteries, faith the Apostle, and all Knowledge; and have not charity: I am nothing,* 1 Cor. xiii. 2. There follows in the next verse an expression still more remarkable; *though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* From This passage it appears, that the word *Charity*, in the New Testament, does not signify (as we now use it) only *Alms to the poor*; but *That universal Love and Good-will towards all men, which includes both It and all other Vertues*; The constant practice of *which universal Charity, is indeed*

S E R M. *indeed Worshipping God in Spirit and in*  
VI. *Truth.*

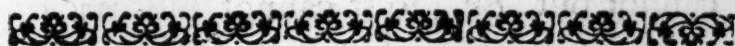
4<sup>thly</sup>. OF transgressing this Precept in the Text, *They* also are guilty, who are over-zealous and contentious about *small* things, which withdraw the affections and the attention from *greater*. Their superstitious *zeal* about which things, is like the unprofitable excrescencies of fruitful plants, eating out and destroying the life of religion. In our Saviour's phrase, *they tithe mint, anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and truth.*

Lastly, ALL such persons are very far from worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth, who living in the practise of *any* known sin, serve not God with the *whole* Heart and Spirit, *cleansing themselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of the Lord.*



## SERMON VII.

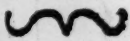
*Of the IMMUTABILITY of  
G O D.*



M A L. iii. 6.

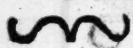
*For I am the Lord; I change not.*



N discoursing upon these S E R M O N words of the Prophet, I shall VII.  
*first* endeavour to show in   
*what* respects God must be  
acknowledged to be Un-  
changeable, or *wherein* this Attribute of  
Immutability consists. And *2dly*, I shall  
consider, what *Uses* may be made of This  
meditation, in the government of our Life  
and Practise.

I. I N



SERM.  
VII.

I. IN order to explain the Nature of This divine Attribute of Immutability, and show distinctly *wherein* it *consists*; it is to be observed, that both in Reason and Scripture God is considered as Unchangeable, upon *different Accounts* and in very *different Respects*.

1<sup>st</sup>. IN respect of his *Essence*, God is absolutely unchangeable, because his Being is necessary, and his Essence Self-existent: For whatever *necessarily Is*; as it cannot but *Be*, so it cannot but *continue* to be *invariably what it is*. That which depends *upon* Nothing, can be affected by Nothing, can be *acted upon* by Nothing, can be *changed* by Nothing, can be *influenced* by no *Power*, can be *impaired* by no *Time*, can be *varied* by no *Accident*. The Scripture does not often enter into the philosophical part of This Speculation, but yet very emphatically expresses it in the *Name* which is given to God both in the Old Testament and in the New. In the Old Testament, God himself declared it to *Moses*, *Exod. iii. 14. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.* And in the New Testament,

## Of the Immutability of GOD.

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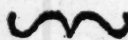
ment, St *John* sets it forth in the beginning of his Prophecy, Rev. i. 4. *Grace be unto you and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Other things also *Are*, and *have been*, and *shall be*: But because what they *have been*, might have been *otherwise*; and what they *Are*, might as possibly *not have been at all*; and what they *shall be*, may be very *different from what Now is*; therefore of *Their* changeable and dependent essence, which to day may be *one thing*, and to morrow *another thing*, and the next day possibly *nothing at all*; of such a dependent and changeable essence, compared with the invariable Existence of God, it *scarce* deserves to be affirmed that it *Is*. And 'tis very remarkable, that in the passage now cited, *He which is, and which was, and which is to come*, the words in the Original are placed in a very unusual construction, a construction nowhere else found in the whole New Testament, nor perhaps in any other Book; but very suitable to such a singular occasion; so as to signify, Not barely, *He which is, and was, and is to come*, (for

VOL. I. L That

S E R M.  
VII.

SERM.

VII.

ἐπεὶ τοῦ ὁ  
ἑν, &c.

ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ.

Ps. cii. 26.

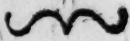
That *may* perhaps, in *Some* sense, be affirmed also of some *other* Beings;) but it signifies, *He* whose Being (or whose proper *Name* and *Character*) is, essentially and invariably, *which Is, and Was, and is to come*. And This expression, is very agreeable to the Sublimity of the Prophetic Style. In *other* places, the Scripture sets forth the same thing, only in *more easy and popular* expressions: Stiling God, *the King immortal*, 1 Tim. i. 17; Which *only hath immortality*, ch. vi. 16. that is, who *only hath it immutably and independently*: The *incorruptible* God, Rom. i. 23. and, *from everlasting to everlasting*, (that is, by an unchangeable essence,) thou art God, Ps. xc. 2. All *other* things are changeable and perishable; even the Frame of the Heavens themselves above, and the Foundations of the Earth beneath; *They all shall perish, yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; But Thou art the Same, the Same through all generations, and beyond all generations still unchangeably the same.*

2dly. IN



## Of the Immutability of GOD.

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2dly. IN respect of his *Perfections* like- S E R M.  
wise, as well as his *Essence*, God is abso- VII.  
lutely *unchangeable*. Concerning *those*   
*Perfections* which flow *necessarily* from  
his *Essence*, and depend not on his *Will*,  
this is Self-evident; because whatever  
*necessarily* flows from any Cause or Prin-  
ciple, must likewise of necessity be as in-  
variable, as the Cause or Principle from  
which it necessarily proceeds. Of This  
kind, are the Power, the Knowledge,  
the Wisdom, and the other *natural* At-  
tributes of God; which having no de-  
pendence even upon his *own Will*, any  
more than his very Being itself has; 'tis  
plain they can *much less* be subject to any  
Alteration, from any *other* Cause or Pow-  
er whatsoever. Concerning those *other*  
*Perfections*, the Exercise whereof depends  
upon his *Will*; such are his Justice, Ve-  
racity, Goodness, Mercy, and all other  
*moral* *Perfections*; the absolute Immuta-  
bility of *these*, is not indeed so obvious  
and self-evident; because it depends on the  
unchangeableness, not only of his *Essence*,  
but of his *Will* also. Nevertheless, upon  
careful consideration, the unchangea-  
bleness

SERM.

VII.



bleness of *These* likewise, will no less certainly appear: because in a Being who always knows what is right to be done, and can never possibly be deceived, or awed, or tempted, or imposed upon; his *general Will* or *Intention*, of doing always what is best and most fit and right, will in reality, though not upon the *same* ground of natural *Necessity*, yet in event, and upon the whole, be as *certainly and truly unchangeable*, as his very *Essence* itself. With great reason therefore does the Scripture thus speak of his *Justice and Veracity*, Pf. cxvii. 2. *The Truth of the Lord, endureth for ever*; and Pf. cxi. 3, 5, 7, 8. *His righteousness endureth for ever; he will ever be mindful of his covenant; The works of his hands are verity and judgment, all his commandments are sure; They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in Truth and Uprightness.* And concerning his *Mercy and Goodness*, Pf. xxxvi. 5. *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds; Thy righteousness is like the strong mountains, thy judgments are like the great deep.* And the

*Of the Immutability of GOD.*

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the Apostle St *James* represents this to us S E R M.  
under a very elegant Similitude, *ch. i. 17.* VII.

*Every good and perfect Gift, saith he, cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.* The Comparison is extremely elegant, drawn from the consideration of That which in corporeal things is the least subject to change, *viz.* the Sun shining in the Heavens. The *Sun*, is the greatest, the most regular, the most stable and constant Dispenser of Light and Heat and fruitful influences, upon the whole Face of This inferior World; yet is his influence varied by different Motions, by days and nights, by Winter and Summer, by clouds and shadows, and by alterations within its own Body. But God, the *Father* of spiritual *Light*, the Author and Disposer of all good and perfect Gifts, has in him no Motion, no Uncertainty, no Alteration of any of his Perfections, *no Variableness neither shadow of turning.*

3dly, As God is unchangeable in his *Essence*, and in the *general Perfections* of his *Nature*; so is he also in the *particular*



SERM. *Decrees and Purposes* of his *Will*; and so  
 VII. likewise in his *Laws*, in his *Promises*, and  
 in his *Threatnings*. The Reason is; be-  
 cause, having all *Power* and all *Know-*  
*ledge*, he can never resolve upon any  
 thing, which shall be either not *possible* or  
 not *reasonable* to be accomplished. All  
*finite* Beings, are frequently forced to  
 change their Designs; because they often  
 find it *impossible* to finish what they begin,  
 or *unreasonable* to pursue their first Inten-  
 tion: But in *God*, these things have no  
 place.

HE is unchangeable in all his *Decrees*  
*and Purposes*; because having all things  
 in his *Power*, and comprehending all  
 things in his *Foreknowledge*, he can by  
 no Force be over-ruled, he can by no sur-  
 prize or unexpected accident be prevented,  
 he can by no unforeseen Alteration in the  
 reasons of things be himself changed in  
 his Purpose. *The Counsel of the Lord*  
*standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his*  
*Heart from generation to generation,*  
*Pf. xxxiii. 11. He is in one mind, and*  
*who can turn him? and what his Soul desi-*  
*reth, even That He doth, Job. xxiii. 13.*  
 Some

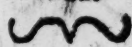
*Of the Immutability of GOD.*

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Some have from these passages attempted to deduce the doctrine of absolute Predestination; that because the Decrees and Purposes of God are unchangeable, therefore Mens Salvation or Condemnation does not at all depend on any Works in their own Power. And indeed, were there any such Decree, it could not be denied but it would be unchangeable, and consequently that All Religion were vain. But the *Truth* is, that the Scripture mentions no *such* Decree at all; and therefore men need not be concerned about the Unchangeableness of That, which has no Being. The Decree of God, is not that This or That particular person, shall necessarily be saved or perish; (For then What Need, or what Use would there be of a day of Judgment?) But his Decree is, that Faith and Obedience, in whomsoever it is found, shall lead to Salvation; and Disobedience on the contrary, to Destruction: And *This* Decree, is indeed, like all his other Purposes, absolutely unalterable.

S E R M.

VII.

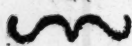


L 4

AGAIN,

SERM.

VII.



AGAIN, in his *Laws* likewise, that is, in the uniform Intention of all his Commandments, God is perfectly *unchangeable*; because they are always founded on the same immutable *reasons*, the eternal Differences of Good and Evil, the original nature of Things, and universal Equity; and they always tend to the same regular *End*, the Order and Happiness of the whole Creation. Of This, the Law of *Nature* was the primary institution; the Law of *Moses*, was the typical or figurative Representation; and the Gospel of *Christ*, its completion or perfect Restoration. And this is the meaning of that passage of the Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 8. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* That this is here spoken, not of the *Person*, (though in *That* sense also it is true; but that it is *here* spoken, not of the *Person*) but of the *Law* of Christ, appears from the words immediately following, with which it is connected; *Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines; for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; his Doctrine is, eternally and unchangeably,*

One



*Of the Immutability of G O D.*

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One and the same. *The Gospel*, saith the same Apostle, *Gal. iii. 8.* was preached before unto Abraham: which Gospel, the Law that was given four hundred years after, could not disannul; but was added only because of Transgression, (that is, because of the infirm and childish state of the people of the Jews,) till the promised Seed should come; till the more explicit declaration of that Faith, by which alone both Abraham and all good men from the beginning of the world were, as all good Christians shall be even unto the End, uniformly justified; that is, by the everlasting Gospel, *Rev. xiv. 6.* the eternal and unchangeable Law of God.

SERM.  
VII.

FURTHER; in his Covenants or Promises, (such as are not declared to be conditional, and annexed to certain particular Qualifications,) God is likewise perfectly unchangeable. The Reason is, because Covenants or Promises of this kind are founded upon such grounds as cannot be altered; even upon the original, fixt and permanent Designs and Intentions of all-wise Providence. Thus, concerning the Promise made to Abraham; God, saith the

S E R M. the Apostle, *Heb. vi. 13. because he could*

VII. *swear by no greater, swear by himself;*

*----- confirming it by an Oath, to show unto the heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel.* The reason of which unchangeable resolution was, because the giving that land to *Abraham* and to his Seed after him, included the Promise both of the *temporal Jerusalem* for an Habitation of the true Worshippers of God *here*, and of the *heavenly Jerusalem* wherein both *Abraham* himself personally and all his spiritual Posterity were to be made happy *hereafter*. Of the same Nature is That Declaration concerning *all Israel*, *Num. xxiii. 19. God is not a man, that he should lye; neither the Son of Man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.* The reason of This, is, because it was a declaration of the whole Scheme of Providence in establishing a Standard of true Religion among that People: which was a matter not to be altered by any mens  
future

future behaviour: It was one of those SERM.  
VII.  
things, which God might justly, and without wrong to any man, determine *at first* by his absolute Supreme Power; (as in the case of *Jacob* and *Esau*, he declared, *before either of them was born or had done either good or evil*, that the posterity of the elder should serve that of the younger;) and which Design afterwards, in the whole course of his Providence, he might continue to accomplish in the same manner, however different mens behaviour might be under the several periods of *That dispensation*. And This is the true Meaning of that other difficult Text in *St. Paul*, *Rom. xi. 28, 29. As concerning the Gospel, they (the Nation of the Jews) are Enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the Father's sake; For the Gifts (these Gifts) and Calling of God are without Repentance*. Some have applied *These* words also to the doctrine of Predestination: But their being spoken expressly of *whole Nations*, and not of *single persons*, evidently demonstrates the contrary; and shows at the same time the reason of the immutability of  
of



SERM. of these Gifts of God, namely because  
 VII.

they are not moral Gifts or Graces to particular Persons, but parts of the general Scheme and Design of Providence in the Government of the World thro' successive Ages. Of the same kind is that promise of God to *David*, Ps. lxxxix. 21. *I have found David my Servant, with my Holy oyl have I anointed him; ----- my mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my Covenant shall stand fast with them; ----- If his children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Truth to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lye unto David.* These Promises, were unalterable Prophecies, of a Messiah to arise out of the Seed of *David*; As had in like manner before been promised to *Adam* and the Patriarchs, to *Abraham*, to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*. And therefore 'tis a weak thing in the modern

modern *Jews*, to allege that their *Sins* S E R M.  
have prevented the coming of the *Messiah*; VII.  
which was one of the original great Con-  
stitutions of Providence, and a Promise  
of God not to be repented of.

*Lastly*, GOD is *unchangeable* likewise  
in his *Threatnings*; that is to say, in such  
*Threatnings*, as are not *merely personal*;  
For of *Those* I shall have occasion to  
speak presently: But in his *general Threat-*  
*nings*, as well as in his *Promises*, God is  
absolutely *unchangeable*. The Reason is,  
because, as his Love to Virtue and Good-  
ness is unalterable, so his Hatred to Vice  
is irreconcilable; and also because these  
Threatnings, are often *Prophetick* parts of  
the general Scheme of Providence. Thus  
in the case of *Saul*; tho', upon his re-  
penting in some measure, the Prophet  
consented to honour him for the present  
before the Elders of his people; yet in  
the matter of the Kingdom as to the  
Time to come, the Threatning of God,  
being more a Prophecy of the great  
Counsels of Providence, than a personal  
Threatning to *Him*, could not be rever-  
sed: 1 Sam. xv. 28. *The Lord has rent*  
the

SERM. the Kingdom of Israel from thee this day,  
 VII. and hath given it to a Neighbour of thine,  
 ~~~~~ that is better than Thou; And also the  
 Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent;
 for he is not a man, that he should repent.

In like manner, the Dispersion and Captivity of the Jewish Nation for some Ages before and after the Coming of the Messiah; at the same time that it was a just Punishment for *their particular Sins*, being moreover in general one of the great Events or Dispensations of Providence in the whole Oeconomy or Government of Mankind upon Earth; is always spoken of by the Prophets, as a Judgment which God would indeed *put an end to* upon the Repentance of that Nation, but the *Sentence and Execution whereof he would not reverse*. Jer. iv. 27. *Thus hath the Lord said, The whole Land shall be desolate:----- I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.* And Ezek. xxiv. 14. *I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent.* And therefore very remarkable is the
 Answer

Answer that was given to good King *Josiah*; when, being grieved at these Threatnings, he sent to inquire of the Lord; *2 Kings xxii. 15.* Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you, ---- I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof; ---- But to the King himself ---- thus shall ye say; ---- Because thine Heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thy self before the Lord, behold therefore I will gather Thee unto thy Fathers ---- in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the Evil that I will bring upon this place. And the Account given of this matter in the following chapter, is no less remarkable; *ch. xxiii. 25*; and *ch. xxiv. 4.* Like him was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his Heart, ---- neither after him arose there any like him: Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his Anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal, ---- and for the innocent blood that he shed, which the Lord would not pardon.

AGAINST

SERM. AGAINST all that has been hitherto
 VII. said, concerning the Unchangeableness of
 God; there is One very obvious, and
 great *Objection*; drawn from those Texts
 of Scripture, which seem to speak of
 God in a very different manner from
 those already cited, and to represent him
 on the contrary as very frequently repent-
 ing and changing his Purpose. Thus 'tis
 recorded, *Gen. vi. 5.* that when God *saw*
that the wickedness of man was great in
the Earth, --- it repented the Lord that
he had made man on the Earth, and it
grieved him at his Heart; and *1 Sam. xv.*
35. that the Lord repented, *that he had*
made Saul King over Israel; and *Num.*
xiv. 30, 34. concerning a whole gene-
 ration of the people of *Israel*, *Doubtless*
(saith he) ye shall not come into the land,
concerning which I sware to make you dwell
therein, and ye shall know my breack of
promise, or (as it is better rendred in the
margin) Ye shall know the altering of my
Purpose: And *Jer. xxvi. 13.* *Amend your*
ways and your doings, --- and the Lord
will repent of the evil that he hath pro-
nounced against you: And *Jonah iii. 10.*
 God

God saw their works, that they turned from S E R M.
their evil way; and God repented of the VII.
Evil that he had said he would do unto 
them, and he did it not. These passages
(I say) may at first sight seem to be a
very strong *Objection*, against what has
been before laid down concerning the
Unchangeableness of God in all his Pur-
poses. But the *Answer* likewise, from
what has been before said, is plain and
obvious. *Those* Declarations of the De-
signs and Purposes of God, which are
Prophetick of the great Events of Provi-
dence, are *in themselves* absolutely *fixt*
and unalterable; because the Wisdom of
God could not possibly be deceived, in
the original Design and intention of ap-
pointing them: But *these* Promises and
Threatnings, which are merely *personal*,
either to any particular man, or to any
Number of men, are always *conditional*;
because the Wisdom of God thought fit
to make *These* depend on the Behaviour
of Men; and the Immutability of God
with regard to *These*, does not consist in the
unalterableness of the Things themselves,
but in the unchangeableness of *the Condition*
upon which they are to be performed. The

S E R M. Rule, is universal and unchangeable; *Jer.*

VII. xviii. 7. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, — to pull down and to destroy it; if that nation — turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them: And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, — to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, — then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. The Expressions, of God's repenting, grieving, and the like; are only figurative, in condescension to the weakness of our Apprehensions; signifying, not any Change in God himself, but only a Difference of the Event with regard to Us. God's Affection towards Good or Evil, towards Virtue or Vice, is therefore uniform and unchangeable; because his Promises and Threatnings invariably follow these Dispositions, through all the Changes of mens personal behaviour. Thus Good Parents and Princes, without any Change in *Themselves*, encourage or discourage their respective children or subjects, according as *They* change their behaviour for the better or the worse.*

Thus

Of the Immutability of GOD. 163

Thus *Laws themselves*, which can have SERM. VII.
no *Affection*, nor Change of *Affection*,
towards one person or another; yet vary
their *Effect*, themselves remaining unva-
ried; and bring rewards or punishments,
according to the different behaviour of
the person upon whom they are exe-
cuted. The only difference in This case,
is; that Laws made by the best *human*
Wisdom, can take *no* notice of the *Re-*
pentance of great Malefactors in the case
of capital Crimes; because 'tis impossible
for human Wisdom to discern when such
Repentance is sincere, and consequently
'tis altogether unsafe to trust to any pre-
tences of That kind: But God who sees
the inmost Dispositions of Mens Hearts,
judges always according to the reality of
those Dispositions, and dispenses his Re-
wards or Punishments accordingly. And
in This, he acts uniformly, without
Change or Variation. As the same Fire,
with one unvaried Action, consumes com-
bustible matter, but purifies and refines
Gold; and the same Sun, with one con-
tinual Heat, melts one sort of Bodies,
and hardens another; so God, without

SERM. any change or alteration in himself, pun-
 VII. nishes the wicked when they so continue,
 and shows compassion towards the same
 persons when they become truly and sin-
 cerely penitent.

II. THE *Uses* of this Discourse, by way
 of Application, concerning the Immuta-
 bility of God, are briefly as follows.

1st, THE *Unchangeableness* of God's *na-
 tural Perfections*, and the *Promise* of Him
 to whom those Perfections so invariably
 belong; is to *good men* at all times the
 greatest possible security, that they shall
 not finally fail to be Happy. When the
 World, and all things that are therein,
 shall fail; the Power of God, his Wis-
 dom, his Goodness, his *Love* of Virtue,
 are Perfections which can never fail in
themselves; and his *Promise* secures the
 Application of them to *Us*; if we conti-
 nue to live in obedience to his Commands.
*Heb. vi. 13, 17. When God made Promise
 to Abraham; because he could swear by no
 greater, he swore by himself; --- Wherein
 God willing more abundantly to shew unto
 the heirs of Promise the immutability of his
 counsel, confirmed it with an Oath; That
 by*

by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. And Tit. i. 2. The Hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began. The same Inference is drawn by the Prophet in the words of the Text; *I am the Lord, I change not,* (my Compassion, my Promise, is immutable;) therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed. And by the Psalmist, Ps. xxxiii. 11, 12. *The Counsel of the Lord standeth for ever; Therefore Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance.* And Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7. *Thy righteousness is like the strong mountains; ----- Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

2dly, THE Threatnings of him whose nature and perfections are *unchangeable*, ought to be a perpetual Terror to *impenitent Sinners*. He will by no means clear the Guilty, nor can by any application be reconciled to Sin. No Bribe, no Force, no Artifice, no Intercession, no length of

S E R M. Time, can change his Hatred towards
 VII. unrighteous *Actions*; or hinder him,
 without true Repentance and effectual
 Amendment, from punishing unrighteous
Men. His Wisdom, his Honour, his
 Goodness, obliges him to preserve the
 Dignity of his Laws and Government;
 and 'tis therefore a dreadful thing for wilful
 Sinners to fall into the hands of the
 ever-living, ever-unchangeable God.

3dly, ON the contrary, the consideration of the *Mercy* of Him, who is *unchangeable* in his Perfections, ought to be a no less constant encouragement to such as are truly *penitent*, and sincerely desirous to amend. Men, are oftentimes weak and passionate, and implacable when provoked: But the Mercy and Compassion of *God*, is, like all the other perfections of his Nature, unchangeably ready to extend itself towards those, who at any time become capable Objects of it. And from the same consideration, appears likewise the absolute and indispensable *Necessity of Repentance*: For as the Mercy of God is always open to the penitent, so from it the impenitent are irreversibly excluded.

'Tis

Of the Immutability of GOD.

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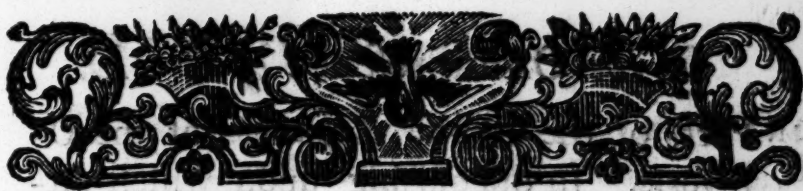
'Tis impossible, that *God* should change: SERM.
VII.
The Sinner *may* change, and *must* do so, or perish.

4thly and *Lastly*; As *Unchangeableness* is an Excellency and Perfection in *God*; so in *Man*, on the *contrary*, to *change* his opinion and manner of acting, when there is just cause so to do, is one of *his* greatest Commendations. And the Reason in Both, is the same; namely, that Right and Truth are to be followed unchangeably. As therefore *God*, who *never can* err in his judgment of Right and Truth, must consequently be unchangeable in his acting according to it; so, for the very same Reason, frail and fallible *Man*, whenever he finds he *has* erred from what is True and Right, must immediately return unto it. But in things certainly and demonstrably *True*; or which, upon the fullest and most careful examination, are found evidently and undeniably *Good*; in these things, men ought to be firm and stedfast without wavering; and *not like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to*

M 4 deceive,

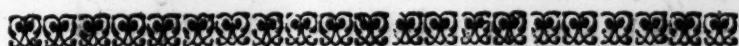
S E R M. deceive. For *Jesus Christ*, i. e. the Do-
 VII. *ctrine or Gospel of Christ, is the same ye-*
 ~~~~~  
*sterday, and to day, and for ever; Be not*  
*therefore (says the Apostle) carried about*  
*with divers and strange doctrines; for it*  
*is a good thing that the heart be established*  
*with grace. And our Saviour himself,*  
*Rev. iii. 15. I would thou wert cold or hot,*  
*and not lukewarm:* The meaning is; If  
 men pretend to make profession of Reli-  
 gion at all, they ought to be, not *luke-*  
*warm*, not careless and indifferent, in  
 matters of Religion; but they ought to  
 be *zealous*, that is, not, *hot in their pas-*  
*sions*, not, *fierce and contentious about*  
*disputable opinions, about things uncertain*  
*and indifferent; but zealous and stedfast*  
*in the pursuit and practice, of what is*  
*clearly and indisputably Just and Right.*  
 I conclude with the exhortation of St.  
*Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Therefore, my belo-*  
*ved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable,*  
*always abounding in the work of the Lord,*  
*forasmuch as ye know that your labour is*  
*not in vain in the Lord.*

SERMON



## SERMON VIII.

*Of the OMNIPRESENCE of  
GOD.*



I KINGS viii. 27.

*But will God indeed dwell on the  
Earth? behold, the Heaven, and  
Heaven of Heavens, cannot con-  
tain thee :—*



*A* S the *Eternity* of God, fig- S E R M.  
nifies his continued existence, VIII.  
through all the periods of  
boundless *Duration*: so his  
*Immensity* or *Omnipresence*,  
signifies his being equally present in every  
Part,

SERM. Part, of the infinite *Expansion* of the U-  
 VIII. niverse. In discoursing upon which At-  
 tribute of the Divine Nature, I shall 1<sup>st</sup>,  
 endeavour briefly to prove the Truth of  
 the Doctrine itself, that God *must be* im-  
 mense or omnipresent. 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall of-  
 fer some particular Observations concern-  
 ing the Nature and Circumstances of  
 This Divine Perfection. and 3<sup>dly</sup>, I shall  
 consider (which is the *most* important of  
 all,) how This Meditation, may become  
 useful to us in influencing our Practise.

*First*, IN order to prove the Truth of  
 the Assertion itself, that God must of Ne-  
 cessity be Omnipresent; 'tis to be observed,  
 (and it may easily be apprehended even by  
 the meanest Capacities,) that if Being or  
 Existence be at all a Perfection, (as it ma-  
 nifestly is the Foundation of all other Per-  
 fections,) it will follow, that in like man-  
 ner as *continuing* to exist through larger  
 periods of *Time*, so also *Extent* of Exist-  
 ence (and consequently of Power) through  
 larger portions of *Space*, is the having a  
 greater degree of this Perfection. And  
 as That Being, which is absolutely per-  
 fect, must with regard to Duration be  
*Eternal*;



*Of the Omnipresence of G O D.* 171

*Eternal*; so, in respect of *Greatness*, it S E R M. must likewise be *Immense*. Otherwise, VIII. its Perfections will be limited; which is the Notion of *Imperfection*: And, by being supposed to be *Finite* in *Extent*, the Perfection of its Power will as totally be destroyed, as it would be supposing it to be *Temporary* in *Duration*. For as Any Being, which is not *Always*; at the *time* when it is not, is as if it never was; so whatever Being is not *every-where*; in *those* places where it is not, is (to all the purposes of Power and Activity) as if it had no Being in any place at all. For no Being can act *Where* it is not, any more than *When* it is not. Power, without Existence, is but an empty word without any reality; and the scholastick Fiction of a Being *acting* in all places, without being *present* in all places, is either making the Notion of God an express contradiction, or else a supposing him *so* to act by the ministry of Others, as not to be Himself Present to understand and know what they Do. He therefore that will frame to himself a true Idea of this Divine Attribute, (so far as finite Understanding

S E R M. standing can comprehend what is Infinite;) must in This, as in others of the  
 VII. divine Perfections, form in his Mind the  
 ~~~~~ *Notion* at the same time, and by the same steps, by which he ascends to the *Proof* of it. And That, in the present case, is more distinctly as follows. All *created* Beings are, by the necessary condition of their Nature, finite and circumscribed. They can be present but in one certain determinate place at once, and they can move but within certain bounds in certain periods of time. The larger those Limits are, in which any Creature can *be* and *act*; which it can either at once fill with its presence, or supply with its activity, swiftness and vigour; so much the greater share has it of this Kind of Perfection: And, by enlarging this perfection to its utmost Possibility, we must consequently ascribe to God, the *most Perfect* Being, *Infinity* or *Immensify*. That is, we must conceive of him, as of a Being that fills all things, and that contains all things within his own boundless Nature; that is not defined or circumscribed by any Space, but co-exists with, and is present  
 sent

Of the Omnipresence of GOD.

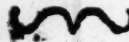
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sent with all things, and infinitely beyond S E R M.
whatever we can imagine, without limits VIII.
and without bounds; *in whom* (as the A- 
postle expresses it,) *we live, and move, and*
have our Being, and in whom all things
subsist.

Again : I T cannot but be evident, e-
ven to the *meanest* Capacity, upon *careful*
consideration ; that He who *made* all
things, as he could not but be *before* the
things that he made, so it is not possible
but he must be *present* also, with the
things that he made and governs. For
things could not be made without the
actual presence of the Power that made
them ; nor can things ever be governed
with any Certainty, unless the Wisdom,
that governs them, be present with them.
Whatever Arguments therefore prove the
Being of God, and his unerring *Provi-*
dence ; must all be understood to prove
equally likewise his actual *Omnipre-*
sence.

Lastly : H E who exists by *Necessity of*
Nature, (which is the Character of
God;) 'tis manifest must exist in all
places alike. For absolute Necessity, is
at

SERM. at *all times* and in *all places* the same.

VIII.  Whatever can be absent at *any time*, may be absent at *all times*; and whatever can be absent from *one place*, may be absent from *another*; and consequently can have no Necessity of existing at all. He therefore, who exists necessarily, must necessarily exist *Always and Every-where*: that is, as he must in duration be Eternal, so he must also in Immensity be Omnipresent.

THE Truth of the Doctrine itself, that God must of Necessity be Immense or Omnipresent, being thus briefly proved by such Arguments as are most obvious and universally intelligible; I proceed now in the

II^d place, To offer some particular *Observations*, concerning the Nature and Circumstances of this divine Attribute. And

1st, 'Tis to be observed, that this Attribute of *Omnipresence*, as 'tis constantly ascribed to God in *Scripture*, so is it in *Reason* likewise so plain and obvious, that the generality of Moral Writers even among the *Heathens* themselves, have not
been



been wanting to assert it clearly and without hesitation. The only difficulty has been, in explaining the particular *Manner* of our apprehending or conceiving it. Concerning which, the Schoolmen have presumed to assert with great Confidence, that the Infinity of God is a *Point* only, and not a proper Immensity; just as they fancy his Eternity to be an *Instant* only, and not a proper everlasting Duration. But these Notions of theirs, as they are absurd and unintelligible, so they are frivolous and vain. For the Excellency of the Perfections of God, does not consist in impossible and contradictory Notions; but in true Greatness, Dignity, Majesty and Glory. And vain men, while they have affected to clog Religion with Absurdities which could not be understood, have made its Doctrines, (as far as in Them lay,) not venerable, but ridiculous. The *Eternity* of God, does not consist in making time past to be still present, and future Time to be already come, (which is a manifest Inconsistency and Impossibility;) but it consists in a true proper everlasting duration, without Beginning

S E R M. ing and without End : And in like manner
 VIII. the *Immensify* of God, does not consist in
 making things to be where they are not,
 or not to be where they are, (which is
 the Effect of confounding the Notion of
 Place :) But it consists in This ; that
 whereas all finite Beings can be present
 but in One determinate Place at once ;
 and corporeal Beings even in that One
 Place very imperfectly and unequally, to
 any Purpose of Power or Activity, only by
 the successive Motion of different Mem-
 bers and Organs ; The Supreme Cause
 on the contrary, being an uniform Infinite
 Essence, and comprehending all things
 perfectly in himself, is at all times equal-
 ly present, both in his real Essence, and
 by the immediate and perfect Exercise of
 all his Attributes, to *every Point* of the
 boundless Immensity, *as if it were* (not that
 it really is) *all but One single Point*. And
 Thus the Scripture itself always repre-
 sents this matter. *Jer. xxiii. 24. Can any*
bide himself in secret places, that I shall
not see them, saith the Lord ? Do not I fill
Heaven and Earth, [saith the Lord ?]
Acts xvii. 27. He is not far from every

Of the Omnipresence of GOD.

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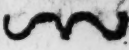
one of Us; For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being. Job xxiii. 8. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. And, in the words of the Text; Will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold, the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee. SERM. VIII.

2dly. 'Tis worthy of Observation, that this right Notion of the Omnipresence of God, will very much assist us to form a just apprehension of the Nature of that *Providence*, which attends to and inspects, not only the great Events, but even the minutest Circumstances of every the smallest Action and Event in the World: Even *That Providence, without which not a Sparrow falls to the ground, and by which the very hairs of our Head are all numbred.* There have been Many, who though they fully acknowledged God's Government of the World, that is, his Power and Dominion over *all things*, and his *actual* Care and Concern for all the

S E R M. *great* and (as they think) most *material*
 VIII. Tranfactions in the Universe; yet have
 been apt to imagine, that *small* and (as
they fancy) *inconsiderable* things, are be-
 neath his Care, and unworthy of his
 Attention. But This is a Mistake ari-
 sing from the Want of having a true No-
 tion of the Divine Omnipresence. For,
 That Perfection being once rightly under-
 stood, it cannot but be evident, that *all*
 things are alike easy to be inspected by
 him as *any*, and the *minuteſt* things as
 much ſo as the *greateſt*; Nay, it will ap-
 pear, that not only the ſmalleſt things are
not unworthy his inſpection, but that even
 in the Nature of things 'tis absolutely *im-
 poſſible*, that He who is every where alike
 preſent, ſhould not obſerve and attend to
 every thing alike.

T H E R E is a certain determinate num-
 ber or quantity of things, which every
 intelligent Creature, according to the pro-
 portion of its ſphere of Power and Acti-
 vity, is able to attend to. And by This
 we may judge, that as Creatures of lar-
 ger Capacities can obſerve a much greater
 number of things at one and the ſame
 time,

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time, than Beings of a lower rank can SERM.
imagine it possible they should; so God, VIII.
who is present every where, can with in- 

finitely greater Ease direct and govern *all things in the World at once*, than we can attend to those *few* things which fall within the compass of our short observation. By This also is removed the Objection of Those, who think *Man* so small and inconsiderable a part of the immense Universe, as that 'tis *beneath* the infinite Majesty of God to take such particular care of so mean a part of the Creation; to show so great condescension towards such inconsiderable Beings, as to send his own Son into the World on purpose, for their Redemption and Salvation. For they who thus object, do not consider, that though Man is indeed a very inconsiderable part of the Works of God, when compared with the *whole* Creation; yet in *This Place*, and upon *this Earth*, he is the greatest and most valuable of all. Wherefore while the Omnipresence of God takes suitable care of all his *other* Creatures through the whole Universe, each in their proper state; *in This place*,

S E R M. there is nothing *more* worthy of his care;
 VIII. than Man; nothing, *besides* Man, capable of being taught to serve him, of being brought to Happiness and Glory by him.

3dly. 'Tis here proper to observe, how weak have been the Scruples of such persons, who have been afraid to acknowledge the true Notion of the Divine Omnipresence, lest they should seem to diminish from the Glory and Majesty of God, by supposing him to be always actually present in all, even in *impure*, places. For They, who have raised to themselves This difficulty, have not been aware, that as the Beams of the Sun are not at all soiled by the Matter they shine upon, and as the Purity and Holiness of the Divine Nature is not in the least diminished by beholding all the *Wickedness* and *moral Impurity* which is acted in the World; so the Omnipresent Essence of God is not at all affected, by any *Natural Impurity* of Things or Places whatsoever; it being the superlative Excellency and Prerogative of his Nature, to *act* always upon all things every where, and
 2 itself

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itself to be acted upon by Nothing. All the *sensible* Qualities of Matter, are merely *relative* to *Us* in our present state, depending on the frame of *our* bodily Organs, and not being any thing really inherent in the Things themselves. We behold only the outward Surfaces of things, and are affected only by the various Motions and Figures of certain small parts of Matter; which, by the Help of *Microscopes*, appear even to *Us* to be really very different in Themselves from what our Senses represent them; And to a Spirit, which sees the inward real Essences of Things, and not the external sensible Images which affect *Us*, they have no similitude at all with our Imaginations.

4thly, IT will be here necessary to observe, How and in what sense, God, who is every where necessarily alike present, is yet in Scripture so frequently represented to be in *Heaven*: As if He who is in *All* places, could be confined in *Any*; or any proper Habitation could be ascribed to *Him*, whom (as *Solomon* declares) *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain*. The True meaning therefore of

S E R M. God's being in *Heaven*, is to express his

VIII. *Height and Dignity*; not in *place*, but in

 *Power*: It being only a *similitude* drawn into common Speech, from the Situation of things in Nature. As the Heavenly Bodies, the Sun and Stars, are High above us in *place*; and all Earthly Blessings depend on the Sun and Rain and the Descent of kindly Influences *literally from above*: so, by an easy *figure* of speech, whatsoever is above us in *Power*, we are from hence used to represent as being above us in *Place*. Our Saviour, speaking of the Pride and Greatness of *Capernaum*; *And thou Capernaum*, says he, *which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell*, Mat. xi. 23. The *Power and Dominion* of the King of *Babylon*, is thus set forth by the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. xiv. 13, 14. *Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the stars of God*: And the *Destruction* of his Monarchy is described after the like manner, ver. 12. *How art thou fallen from Heaven!* The Greatness and Dignity of our Saviour's Kingdom, is repre-

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represented in Scripture, by his *sitting* at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. We know that God has no Hands, nor any Shape or Figure; But the meaning of Christ's sitting on his right hand, is his being exalted next to him in Authority and Power. Thus therefore when we speak likewise of God, even the invisible Father himself, as being in Heaven; it must be understood to express his *Supremacy*, not in *Place*, but in *Power and Dominion*; that He is the High and Holy One, Great and Glorious and Supreme above All. But there is also another reason of this expression, of God's *being in Heaven*: And That is, To signify, that tho' of his real actual Presence there is indeed no Confinement, yet of his Glory and Majesty there is in that Place a particular and extraordinary *Manifestation*. Thus the Angel in the Book of *Tobit* represents it, *ch. xii. 15. I am* (saith he) *one of the seven holy Angels, which go in and out before the Glory of the Holy One*: And the Salutation to the Churches, which begins the Book of the *Revelation*, *ch. i. 4. Grace be unto you, and Peace from Him*

S E R M. *which is, and which was, and which is to*
 VIII. *come, and from the seven spirits which are*
 ~~~~~ *before his Throne. The real and proper*

Acts xvii. *Presence of God, is equally in all places:*  
 27. *But his Throne, his Glory, the place where*

*the righteous shall see his Face, where they shall behold a more particular glorious Manifestation of his Power and Majesty, is in Heaven. In like manner, here upon Earth; in places, where God has been pleased more particularly to manifest his Glory, to place his Name There, to receive There the Homage of his Servants; in those places God in Scripture-phrafe is said to Be: Not as if at the same time he was not equally in all other places also; but that in these places he chose to manifest himself to his Servants, and There to receive homage from them. The Patriarch Jacob, concerning the place where he first saw the Vision of Angels ascending and descending out of heaven; Surely, says he, the Lord is in this place, Gen. xxviii. 16; and it shall be the House of God, ver. 22. In like manner in the Temple at Jerusalem, the Glory of God appeared visibly, 2 Chron. vii. 1. and there*

## Of the Omnipresence of GOD.

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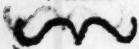
it also *was*, when it did *not* appear: and how He whom the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, did thus

S E R M.  
VIII.

at that time dwell on Earth in a Temple made with hands, is well expressed by Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 30. *Hearken thou to the Supplication of thy Servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray in, or towards, this place; and bear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place: The sense is; God, who is present in every place, had appointed in That place to receive his Tribute of worship. And upon this Account, the place was esteemed Holy, and respected accordingly: Eccles. v. 1. Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God. What the meaning is, of that unusual Phrase, Keep thy foot; is explained Exod. iii. 5. where God, appearing to Moses in the Bush, says thus unto him; Put off thy shoes from off thy Feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. The Custom or Manner in those Eastern countries of showing Honour or Veneration, was by uncovering the Feet; as our present method of showing respect, is by uncovering the Head. Yet God himself was*  
not

SERM.

VIII.



not present even then in the Bush, any more than in all other places; but the place was made Holy by God's manifesting his *Glory* there; for so St. *Stephen* expressy tells us, *Acts* vii. 30. *there appeared to Moses an Angel of the Lord, in a flame of Fire in the Bush.* In like manner, God is said in Scripture to dwell in the Hearts of good men: (*with him that is of an humble and contrite Spirit*, as the Prophet, *Is.* lvii. 15. expresses it;) And that the *Bodies* of them which are sanctified, are *Temples* of the Holy Ghost, and *Temples* of God. Not by any confinement of the *Presence* of God; but by his being pleased to show forth his *Power and Influence*, in particular places, and to particular persons.

THESE Observations being premised, it remains in the

III<sup>d</sup> and last place, THAT I proceed to draw some useful Inferences from what has been said; and to show (which is the *most* material of all,) how this Meditation upon the divine Omnipresence, may become useful to us in influencing our Practice. And

1<sup>st</sup>, BY



1<sup>st</sup>, BY This character of Omnipre-  
 fence, the *True God of the Universe* is  
 distinguished from all False Deities; and  
 the Vanity of *Idolatry*, made plainly to  
 appear. The Gods of the Nations, *pre-*  
*tended* to be but Gods of *particular Coun-*  
*tries*; as the Gods of *Henah, Ivah, and*  
*Sepharvaim*, 2 Kings xviii. 34. Or, of  
 particular *parts* of the *same* Country; as  
 Gods of the *Hills, and not of the Valleys*,  
 1 Kings xx. 28. That is, at most, Be-  
 ings only of a limited presence and pow-  
 er: in reality, of no power or dominion  
 at all; and commonly not so much as  
 any Beings at all, but indeed mere Ficti-  
 ons and Imaginations of Men: *Lyes, and*  
*Lying Vanities*, as the Scripture frequent-  
 ly stiles them. But the True God, who  
*made* Heaven and Earth and all things  
 that are therein, does by his presence and  
 power *inspect also and govern* all things,  
 in the *Whole* Heavens and in the *Whole*  
 Earth.

AND from the same consideration, ap-  
 pears also the Vanity of making any I-  
 mage of the *True* God, as well as of  
 worshipping *false* Gods. For by what  
 Likeness

SERMON:  
 VIII.  


S E R M. Likeness can *be* be represented, the Majesty of whose Presence fills all things?

VIII.

And how foolish is it to think, that He *in whom we live and move and have our Being*, and whose *offspring we all* (even all *rational Beings*) *are*, should himself be *like unto Gold or Silver or Stone graven by art and man's device*? Acts xvii. 28, 29.

FROM hence likewise appears the Folly, of such *Superstitions* as that of *Balak*; who when *Balaam* was not permitted to curse *Israel* from *one place*, carried him to *another*; saying, *Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God, that thou mayst curse me them from thence*, Num. xxiii. 27. As if God saw things *differently in different places*; and would curse *Israel* from *One place*, when he had blessed him from another.

FROM the same reason appears also the Vanity of *Saint-worship*, among Christians: As if God, who being Omnipresent hears all Prayer *Himself*, should either need or regard the Intercession of Others, whom he hath *not expressly*, (as in the

## Of the Omnipresence of GOD.

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the case of *our Saviour*,) appointed to that S E R M.  
High and Singular Office. VIII

2dly, If God is Omnipresent; from hence it follows, that he is to be worshipped and revered *every where*, in *private* as well as in publick. Honour is to be paid him, not only by *Angels* before his Throne in *Heaven*, and by the *congregation* publicly in his *Temple* on Earth; but also by *every man* singly in his most *private retirements*. *God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands*, Acts vii. 47; and xvii. 24. that is, he is not present *there only*, but sees also that more retired part of our behaviour, which is concealed from the world; and most of all approves that *private piety* and virtue, which cannot but proceed from a sincere mind, because it is not capable of the applause of Men. *When Thou prayest*, saith our Saviour; *enter into thy closet, and pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly*, Mat. vi. 6.

NAY further; he beholds, not only our most private retirements, but also That which is still much *more secret* than these,

SERM. these, even the very Thoughts and In-  
 VIII. tents of our Hearts; that inward frame  
 and disposition of the mind, which may  
 be dissembled and entirely concealed from  
 Men. Hence he is stiled in Scripture,  
*the Searcher of the Hearts and Reins.* Nor  
 are there any Passages in Holy Writ,  
 which do more worthily and magnificently  
 represent him, than those which thus  
 describe him, sitting in the circuit of  
 Heaven, and beholding at one view, all  
 the Actions and all the Thoughts of all  
 men throughout the whole World.  
*2 Chron. xvi. 9. The eyes of the Lord run  
 to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to  
 show himself strong in the behalf of them,  
 whose Heart is perfect towards him. Prov.  
 xv. 3. The eyes of the Lord are in every  
 place, beholding the Evil and the Good:  
 and ver. 11. Hell and destruction are before  
 him; how much more then, the Hearts of  
 the children of Men! And Job xxvi. 6.  
 Hell is naked before Him, and Destruction  
 has no covering.* Which consideration se-  
 riously meditated upon, will teach us to  
 behave ourselves at all times and in all  
 places, with circumspection and care, as  
 in



## Of the Omnipresence of GOD.

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in the presence of our Judge, who con-  
tinually observes us, and in due time

SERM.  
VIII.

*will bring to light the hidden things of  
darkness, and will make manifest the  
counsels of the Hearts, 1 Cor. iv. 5. It  
will teach us to be as much afraid of  
committing any Sin or Impurity in Se-  
cret, as in the Face of the Sun and in  
the presence of all mankind; considering  
that our most private misdeeds are set be-  
fore him, and our secret sins in the Light  
of his countenance, Ps. xc. 8. and that all  
the wickedness men now commit in pri-  
vate, shall one day be published before all  
the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth.  
Lastly, it will oblige us to govern even  
our very Thoughts and Desires, and in-  
deavour to keep them in continual Sub-  
jection to the Law of God; seeing that He  
who is of purer eyes than to behold ini-  
quity, searches even our very Hearts and  
Reins with his intimate presence and all-  
seeing Eye. O Lord, thou hast searched  
me out, and known me; thou knowest my  
down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou un-  
derstandest my Thoughts long before: Thou  
art about my path, and about my bed, and  
spiest*

SERM. spiest out all my ways; Ps. cxxxix. 1. And  
 SVIII. Heb. iv. 12. The word of God is quick  
 and powerful, and sharper then any two-  
 edged sword, piercing even to the dividing  
 asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the joynts  
 and marrow; and is a discerner of the  
 Thoughts and Intents of the Heart: Nei-  
 ther is there any Creature that is not ma-  
 nifest in his Sight; but all things are na-  
 ked and opened unto the eyes of Him with  
 whom we have to do.

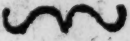
3dly, and to conclude; FROM the con-  
 sideration of God's being Omnipresent,  
 it follows that his Power (as well as  
 Knowledge,) is unlimited; to be every-  
 where relied on by Good men, and to be  
 feared by Bad. As there is no Time, so  
 neither is there any Place, where he is not  
 at hand to protect his Servants. Ps. xlv. 1.  
 God is our refuge and strength, a very pre-  
 sent Help in Trouble; Therefore will we  
 not fear, though the Earth be removed,  
 and though the Mountains be carried into the  
 midst of the Sea. And Hab. iii. 17. Tho' the  
 fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit  
 be in the vines; tho' the labour of the olive  
 shall fail, and the fields shall yield no  
 meat;

*meat; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. But the most affectionate instance in the whole Scripture, of relying on the omnipresent power of God, is that of Jonah in the Whale's belly, ch. ii. 2. Out of the belly of Hell I cried, and thou heardest my Voice: In the midst of the seas, the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me: The depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my Head: I went down to the bottoms of the Mountains, the Earth with her bars was about me for ever; (It should not have been translated, was about me for ever; For That was not so; But, the Earth with her everlasting bars was about me :) yet I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came unto thee. The same consideration ought likewise on the contrary, to be a Terror to wicked and impenitent sinners; that there is no possible place, where they can escape God's justice, or avoid the vengeance of omnipresent wrath. The Anger of Man, as it is but*

S E R M. of short duration, so it can be but of small  
VIII. extent, and may generally be fled from:

But from the Judgment of God, says an excellent Heathen-writer, let no man hope to be able to escape: For though you could descend into the very depth of the Earth, or fly on high to the extremities of the Heavens; yet should you never escape the just judgment of God, either before or after Death. The very same thing is expressed more emphatically by the Holy Ghost in Scripture. *Pf. cxxxix. 6. Whether shall I go then from thy Spirit, or whether shall I go then from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to Hell, thou art there also: If I take the wings of the morning, that is, if I could flee as swift as the morning-light, which darts in a moment from under one end of heaven to the other; and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* Again; *Amos ix. 2. Tho' they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; tho' they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: Tho' they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will*



search them out thence; and though they be SERM.  
hid in the bottom of the sea, thence will I VIII.  
command the serpent and he shall bite them. 

And Job xxxiv. 21. His eyes are upon  
the ways of man, and he seeth all his go-  
ings; There is no darkness, nor shadow of  
Death, where the workers of iniquity may  
hide themselves. And to mention but one  
place more; Ecclus. xvi. 17. Say not thou,  
I will hide myself from the Lord: Shall  
any remember me from above? I shall not  
be remembred among so many people: for  
what is my soul among such an infinite  
number of Creatures? Say not thou thus,  
saith he; For behold, the heaven, and the  
heaven of heavens, the Deep and the  
Earth, and all that therein is, shall be  
moved when he shall visit; The mountains  
also and foundations of the Earth shall be  
shaken with trembling, when the Lord  
looketh upon them: No heart (says he) can  
think upon these things worthily; and Who  
is able to conceive his ways?





# SERMON IX.

*Of the OMNIPOTENCE of  
G O D.*



PSAL. cxlvii. 5.

*Great is our Lord, and Great is  
his Power.*



HIS Psalm is an eloquent SERM.  
*comparison* of the Greatness IX.  
of the Power of God shown  
forth in the works of *Crea-*  
*tion*, with the Greatness of  
the same Power shown forth in the works  
of *Providence* towards his Church and  
People. The works of *Creation* are set  
forth, *ver. 4, 8, 16. He telleth the number*  
O 3 of

SERM. of the Stars, and calleth them all by their

IX. Names; he covereth the heaven with clouds,

and prepareth rain for the Earth; he giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar-frost like Ashes. The works of Providence are set forth, ver. 3, 6, 19. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, and gather together the outcasts of Israel; The Lord setteth up the meek, and bringeth the ungodly down to the ground; He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. The conclusion drawn from Both, is ver. 7. and in the words of the Text, O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving, sing praises upon the harp unto our God; For Great is our Lord, and Great is his Power. In discoursing upon which words, I shall first endeavour to show briefly, that God *must of necessity be* All-powerful. 2dly, I will give some faint and imperfect representations, some general and inadequate Idea, wherein the Perfection of this Power consists. 3dly, I shall consider *what* particulars are *not included* in the true notion even of Omnipotence itself. And 4thly, I shall draw some practical Inferences from the whole.

I. THAT



I. THAT God *must* of necessity be SERM.  
IX.  
*All-powerful*, is self-evident. For since *all things* in the Universe were made by him, and depend upon Him for their very *Being*; and all the *Powers* of all things are derived from him, and must consequently be entirely subject to him; 'tis manifest that nothing can make any difficulty or resistance to the execution of his Will, and therefore his Power must be absolutely infinite. Where there is no *Being*, 'tis plain there can be no *Power*: Now *all things* that *are* in the World, have *no other Being* than what depends on His pleasure: There is therefore, and can be, in the Universe, *no Power* against *His*. This *precarious Being*, which *all things* derive from the mere Will of God, the Apostle elegantly describes, *Rom. iv. 17.* by his *calling those things which be not, as tho' they were*: And the unlimitedness of his Power *over* them, may on the contrary as truly be described, by his *looking on all things that Are, as tho' they were not*. But the truth of this Attribute of the divine Omnipotence, (that mighty working, whereby he is able to sub-

SERM. *due all things to himself,*) is so evident to  
IX. the common reason of mankind, that we  
need not so much seek for Arguments to  
prove and demonstrate its reality, as we  
ought to endeavour to give lively and af-  
fecting descriptions of it, such as may be  
proper to fill mens minds with a just sense  
of the supreme Majesty of God, and to  
excite in them accordingly resolutions of  
Obedience to him. Such descriptions as  
these, the Scripture frequently affords us;  
great and moving descriptions of the  
Power of God, and such as are naturally  
apt to produce in us the profoundest Hu-  
mility and Reverence towards him. Thus  
*Job ix 4. He is wise in heart, and mighty  
in strength; Who has hardened himself a-  
gainst him, and has prospered? which re-  
moveth the mountains, and they know not;  
which overturneth them in his anger:  
which shaketh the earth out of her place,  
and the pillars thereof tremble: Which  
commandeth the Sun and it riseth not, and  
sealeth up the Stars: Which alone spread-  
eth out the Heavens, and treadeth upon the  
waves of the Sea: Which doth great things  
past finding out, yea and wonders without  
number.*

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number. And ch. xxvi. 6. Hell is naked S. E. R. M.  
before him, and destruction hath no cover- IX.  
ing: He stretcheth out the north over the   
empty place, and hangeth the earth upon  
nothing: He bindeth up the waters in his  
thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent un-  
der them: The Pillars of Heaven tremble,  
and are astonished at his reproof: He di-  
videth the Sea with his Power, and by his  
Understanding he smiteth thro' the Proud:  
Lo, these are part of his ways, but how  
little a portion is heard of him? but the  
thunder of his Power, who can understand?  
So likewise the eloquent prophet *Isaiah*,  
ch. xiv. 27. The Lord of Hosts hath pur-  
posed, and who shall disannul it? his hand  
is stretched out, and who shall turn it  
back? And ch. xl. 12. Who hath measured  
the waters in the hollow of his hand? and  
meted out Heaven with the span? and com-  
prehended the dust of the Earth in a mea-  
sure? and weighed the mountains in scales,  
and the hills in a balance? Who hath di-  
rected the spirit of the Lord, or, being his  
Counseller, has taught him? Behold, the  
Nations are as a drop of the bucket, and  
are counted as the small dust of the balance;  
behold,

SERM. behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very  
 IX. little thing: All nations before him are as  
 nothing, and they are counted to him less  
 than nothing and vanity: To whom then  
 will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye  
 compare unto him? To mention but One  
 passage more; Dan. iv. 34. He that liveth  
 for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting  
 dominion, and his kingdom from generation  
 to generation; And all the inhabitants of  
 the earth are reputed as nothing; and he  
 doth according to his Will in the Army  
 of Heaven, and among the inhabitants  
 of the Earth; and none can stay his  
 hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?  
 These are lively descriptions of arbitrary  
 Power indeed; arbitrary, not in the Sense  
 that the Tyrants of This World have oc-  
 casioned that word to be used, when it  
 signifies a Power of doing unreasonable  
 and unjust things, a Power of Violence  
 and unrighteous oppression, a Power of  
 acting according to mere Will and Plea-  
 sure without Right or Reason; but in  
 God, arbitrary or irresistible Power, tho'  
 it is indeed a Power of doing all things  
 absolutely without controul, yet it is so a  
 Power



Of the Omnipotence of GOD.

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Power of doing them, as that at the same S E R M.  
time there is always with the notion of IX.

That Power, necessarily and inseparably connected, an Idea of infinite Reason, Wisdom, and Goodness. And the reason *why* these notions are always inseparably connected, when we think rightly of God; is because, in *Him*, Acting according to his supreme *Will and Pleasure*, does not signify, as it does among corrupt *men*, acting according to Will and Inclination without reason, but on the contrary it signifies always, acting according to *That* Will, which is influenced by *nothing* but the most perfect *Reason* only; which is the same thing, as if Will and Pleasure could be supposed to have no place at all, and the Universe were governed by mere abstract Reason and the Right of Things. For in *God*, Will and Reason are *one and the same* thing; or at least go always so together, *as if* they were but one thing; whereas in the Rulers of *this* world, they too often signify things *contrary* to each other: Governing according to *Law or Reason*, and governing according to *absolute Will or Pleasure*,  
being

SERM. being on *Earth* the two most opposite  
 IX. forms of Government; while in *Heaven*  
 they are nothing but two different Names,  
 of one and the same *Thing*.

If it be asked, whence this difference  
 arises; the reason of it will appear, by  
 considering what we mean, when we af-  
 firm that whatever God does, we are sure  
 is Right, because He does it. Which is too  
 often so understood, as if the *Power and*  
*Will* of God made that to be Right, which  
 is so; and as if it might as easily have  
 made the contrary to become Right. The  
 Consequence of which is, that there is  
 really no difference between good and evil  
 in the *Nature* of Things, but that *Will*  
*and Power* makes all the distinction:  
 From whence tyrannical Men, who have  
*Power* to do what they will, think that  
 They also consequently have a Right to do  
 so. But now This is not only not true  
 with regard to Men, but even with re-  
 gard to God himself also it is plainly a  
 Mistake: For, not *Power or Will*, but  
 the Reason of Things only, is the Foun-  
 dation of Right: And tho' 'tis indeed  
 certainly true, that whatever God does,  
 we

we are sure 'tis Right, because he does SERM.  
it; yet the meaning of This, is not, that IX.  
God's *doing or willing* a thing, *makes* it   
to be Right; but that *his* Wisdom and  
Goodness is such, that we may depend  
upon it, even *without* understanding it,  
that whatever he wills, was *in itself*  
Right, *antecedent* to his willing it; and  
that he *therefore* willed it, *because* it was  
Right. Wherefore though among Men,  
whose Wills are not always righteous,  
absolute or arbitrary Power is the thing  
in the world the most to be detested,  
dreaded, and abhorred, as being the  
Sum total of the greatest Calamities  
that God ever inflicted upon sinful men  
in *This* World; yet the Notion of irre-  
sistible and uncontrollable Power in God,  
where 'tis in conjunction with a perfect  
Understanding and with a righteous Will,  
justly excites in us *nothing* but such a  
*Veneration and Awe*, such a *Sense* of a-  
dorable and incomprehensible *Majesty*, as  
naturally leads us to that *Adoration and*  
*Fear*, that *Honour, Duty, and Obedience*  
towards him, which is the great Principle  
and Foundation of all Religion.

HAVING

SERM. HAVING thus briefly shown *in general*,  
 IX. that God *must* of necessity be *All-powerful*, I proceed now in the

II<sup>d</sup> place, To give *in particular* some faint hints and representations, some little imperfect Idea, *wherein* the peculiar Exercise of this most perfect Power *consists*, and *in what Instances* it has principally displayed itself. And

1<sup>st</sup>, THE Perfection of this Power appears, in its *giving* Being *originally* to all things, and in its governing *them continually* while they are in Being. That the World was not made by *Chance*, appears from the *Beauty and Usefulness* of the things that are in it; and that it does not exist by *Necessity*, is evident from their *Variety*: For in the *Necessity of Fate*, there is no *Variety*; and in the confusions of *Chance*, there is no *Beauty or Usefulness*. The *Being* therefore of the World, is the *Effect* of the *Power* of God; and the *Variety* of finite Powers communicated to different *Creatures*, are a glorious demonstration of the *infinite Power* of the *Creator*. And there is no better way, by which we can frame to ourselves some faint



faint Idea or representation of the *perfect-* SERM.  
*ion* of that Power, than by considering IX.  
in one general view the Number and Va-  
riety of *Effects*, it has produced in the  
Creation; how it has given *Being*, to  
all things; how it has *diversified* that Be-  
ing, under innumerable *Forms*, in the  
Compositions and Motions of *inanimate*  
*Matter*; how it has exalted the products  
of Matter, beyond all the imaginable  
Powers of its unactive nature, in the *Ve-*  
*getation* and *Growth* of *Plants*; how it  
has indued with a *higher Principle*, than  
can arise from Mechanism, the *Brute-*  
*creatures*, furnished with the Powers of  
Self-motion and the sensitive Life; how  
it has, in a much *more* wonderful man-  
ner, implanted in *Men* the Image of the  
divine Nature, even those high Faculties  
of Understanding, Reason, and Will;  
and, beyond all these, which is the Su-  
preme excellency of created Nature,  
made them capable of *Religion*, of know-  
ing, worshipping, obeying, and imita-  
ting their Maker. *Wonderful, O Lord,*  
*are all thy works; and worthy art thou*  
*to receive glory and honour and power;*  
*for*

SERM. for thou hast created all things, and for  
 IX. thy pleasure they Are, and were created,  
 Rev. iv. 11.

NOR does the Perfection of the divine Power appear more in having created things, than it does in governing them continually while they are in being: For he upholdeth all things by the word of his Power, and by his Providence does the  
 Heb. 1. 2. Universe *subsist*. This is that Kingdom of  
 Col. 1. 17. God, which the Psalmist describes, Ps. ciii. 19. *The Lord has prepared his Throne in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all; and Ps. cxlvii. 15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon Earth, and his Word runneth very swiftly.* And to this natural Kingdom of God, may well be applied those words of *St John* concerning his spiritual Kingdom, Rev. xix. 6. *I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude,----saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* To frame to ourselves any just idea of this Power by which God ruleth over all, is absolutely impossible; because our conceptions are altogether finite, and our imagination extends but to a very few ei-  
 I ther

ther objects or degrees of Power. But the best representation we can form of it in our own minds, is by considering, that the Powers of all things in the World put together, bear no proportion to His; and that the Resistance of Universal Nature at once, would to Him be no Resistance at all; who can withdraw from all things the foundation of all Power, even their very Being itself; so that all things are to him, as the Prophet *Isaiab* elegantly expresses it, by the *highest possible*, and yet not *too high* a figure; they are to him, saith he, *less than nothing and Vanity*. The disproportion, can be set forth by no similitude: For, to the greatest Strength, even the thin Air makes some resistance; and the finest web gives some impediment, even to the greatest swiftness: But to the Power of *God*, nothing makes any opposition: Nothing, except the perverse *Will* of wicked Spirits and wicked Men; whom, being indued with freedom, God does not think fit to influence by *Power*, but by the *moral and rational motives only of Promises and Threatnings*: Wherever his *Power* interposes; all things, as

S E R M. they were at first made out of *nothing*, so,  
 IX. with regard to any power of opposing  
 his government, they still continue as  
*nothing*.

B U T this Perfection of the divine Power in *Ruling over all*, as it appears *demonstrably* to *considerate and inquisitive persons*, in that general *Providence* which presides over and directs the *whole course of Nature*; so to the *greater part of mankind*, it manifests itself *more* conspicuously in those remarkable Events, which we usually stile particular *Providences*: Which, when they are directly *miraculous* interpositions, are apt indeed most strongly to affect men; but, *without* That, are sufficient Evidences of the Supreme Power by which the World is governed. Instances of this kind, are, the *Flood* wherewith God destroyed the old World; The bringing the *Jews* out of *Egypt*, with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm; The judgment upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, that great King of *Babylon*, (*Dan. iv.*) who while he was vaunting himself in the pride of his heart, and saying to himself, *Is not This great Babylon which I have built?* suddenly he was struck with such  
 2 a distemper

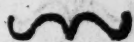


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IX.



a distemper from heaven, that his Understanding was taken from him, and he seemed *to himself* to be driven from among men, and to eat grass with the Beasts of the field, till the Pride of his Heart was humbled, and his reason returned unto him, and he gave glory to the God of Heaven. And, to mention no more Instances; of This kind was the destruction of *Sennacherib*, 2 Kings xix. 35. *when an Angel smote in one night in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand men.* These Princes called themselves *Supreme*, and looked upon themselves as *Lords of the World*; and behaved themselves accordingly, as having no superiour; not considering, in the midst of their Power and Glory, that *he that is Higher than the Highest regarded*, and that *there were Higher than They*, Eccles. v. 8. The greatest mortal power, (of men whose Breath is in their nostrils, that is, whose Life depends upon so small a circumstance as a Breath of Air,) being *nothing* in comparison to the power of the *meanest* ministering Spirit, in the Armies of the Angels of God; *who* (as the Psalmist ex-

S E R M.  
IX.



presses it) *refraineth the Spirit of Princes, and is wonderful among the Kings of the Earth.* This is the *First* particular, wherein the Perfection of the divine Power consists; its giving Being *originally* to all things, and ruling them *absolutely* while they continue in Being.

2dly, THE *second* particular, wherein the perfection of the divine Power consists, is this; that it not only extends to the doing all *things* in the government of the whole Universe, and That without any the least opposition from the *things themselves*; but that it does them also without any *difficulty* in *itself*; without any pains, or labour of operation; with such absolute and perfect *ease*, as not only *Men*, but probably *no finite Beings whatsoever*, do even *those* things, which are the most *easily* done by them. This Notion is sublimely exprest by *Isaiab*, ch. xl. 28. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?* There was a certain Sect among the antient Philosophers, who, pretending they durst not think God should take upon him the  
*Trouble*

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Trouble of governing the World ; covered their Atheism by asserting, that to the Happiness of God it was necessary to suppose him unconcerned *for*, and removed at an infinite distance *from*, the World. But this exemption of the infinitely blessed God, from so mean an imperfection as *Care and Solitude* ; which the *Epicureans* provided for, by making him *absent* from the World ; does on the contrary *really* arise, from his being *present*, actually *Omnipresent*, to every part of the Universe ; so as to be able to direct and govern the *Whole* with *less* difficulty to himself, (if *That* may with any propriety be so called, which indeed is *no* difficulty at all ;) he governs, I say, and directs the whole World with *less* difficulty, than any finite creature can so much as *behold* or *view* any part of it. *He sitteth upon the circle of the Earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; he stretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain, and spreadeth them out as a Tent to dwell in,* Is. xl. 22.

3dly, THE *third and last* particular, wherein the perfection of the divine Power consists ; is, its doing not only

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S E R M. all things, and doing them *without difficulty*, but its doing them also perfectly at once, without standing in need of any Time to do them in. The original substances of all things, were probably created in a moment : In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth, Gen. i. 1. And though the consequent formation of This Earth out of a Chaos, is indeed represented to us as having been performed gradually in certain periods of time ; yet the reason of this, is not that the Power of God required any such number of days (with regard to itself) to accomplish this work in ; but only to represent more distinctly to our conception, the harmony and beauty of the several parts of this wonderful Fabrick of the World ; which the divine Power could as easily have set in order in one single moment, as in six days or years. The Notion of This Perfection of the divine Power, in doing things thus *instantly* or in a moment ; is set forth in Scripture by God's causing things to be produced, as it were without any operation at all, by his mere Will or Command. God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness,



## Of the Omnipotence of GOD.

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2 Cor. iv. 6. saying, Let there be *Light*, S E R M  
and there was *Light*, Gen. i. 3. And IX.  
Pf. xxxiii. 6, 9. By the word of the Lord   
were the Heavens made, and all the host  
of them by the Breath of his mouth; He  
spake the word, and it was done; he com-  
manded, and it stood fast. The meaning  
of all which expressions, is not to be ta-  
ken literally, as if lifeless Matter were  
capable of obeying any *Law*; much less,  
that That which had no Being, could by  
obeying a *command*, come into Being:  
But the meaning is, that the *Actions* of  
God are as swift as *Thought*; and the *Ef-*  
*fects* of his operations, as *immediate*, as if  
*Willing* and *Acting* were really in Him  
(what they are figuratively represented to  
Us,) one and the same Thing. And This  
also is the true meaning, if there be any  
meaning at all, of what the School-Au-  
thors say, when they affirm that God is a  
*mere* or *simple* Act: Not that the *Action*  
*itself*, is the *Person who acts*, (which is  
very unintelligible and very absurd;) But  
that the *Actions* of God are so instan-  
taneous and perfect, that to Us they are  
scarce distinguishable from his *Will* or  
*Mind itself*. Having thus briefly indea-  
voured

S E R M. voured to give some faint hints and re-  
 IX. presentations, some little inadequate Idea,  
 wherein the peculiar Perfection of this  
 divine Power *consists*, and in *what instances* it has principally displayed itself; I  
 proceed in the

III<sup>d</sup> place, To consider *what* particulars are *not included* in the true Notion of Omnipotence itself. And

I<sup>st</sup>, 'TIS evident *Infinite Power* must be understood to reach to all *possible* things, but cannot be said to extend to the working any thing which implies a *Contradiction*: As, that a Thing should *be* and *not be* at the same time; that the same thing should *be made*, and *not be made*; or *have been*, and *not have been*: That the same Body should be in *two places at once*, or *not be in the place where it is*: That things should be *equal* and *not equal* at the same time; or the same thing *greater* or *less* than *itself*. These and the like, are, in the Nature of Things, absolutely impossible; And to ascribe to God, a Power, a doing what can't be done is not *magnifying*, but *making* his Power. And the Reason is plain: Because a Power of causing a thing to *be*, at the same  
 time

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time that it *is not*, is only a Power of SERM.  
doing that which is Nothing, that is, no IX.  
Power at all. 

2dly, THE *Infinite* Power of God, cannot be said to extend to such things, as are naturally *evil* absolutely with respect to *himself*; that is to say, which imply *natural imperfection* in the Being *itself*, to whom such Power is ascribed. Such would be, a Power of *destroying his own Being*, *weakening or diminishing his own Power*, or *limiting it* any otherwise than by the free determinations of Wisdom and Goodness. For, any *capacity* or *possibility* of being *diminished*, even tho' by the unlimited Power *itself working upon itself*, would be *Imperfection or Weakness*, and not *Power*.

3dly, INFINITE Power, cannot be understood to include a possibility of doing such things as are morally *evil*, with regard to *Others*. Such are whatever things are *unjust, unrighteous, cruel, contrary to Promise*, and the like. A possibility of doing any of which things, is (as before) a Mark, not of *Power*, but of *Impotency or Weakness*. Hence the Scripture frequently uses such expressions as  
these;

SERM. these; God, which cannot lye, Tit. i. 2;

IX. he cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13.

And Heb. vi. 13, 18. Because God could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, — confirming the immutability of his counsel by an Oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation. The Ground indeed or Reason of the impossibility of God's doing any of these things, is not the same as the impossibility of working contradictions. For contradictions are impossible absolutely, in the nature of the things themselves; but doing evil is impossible relatively only, with respect to the Nature of a perfectly good Being. But tho' the ground or reason of the impossibility is different, yet the impossibility itself is in Event the same. For God can no more act in contradiction to the moral perfections of his own Nature, than he can act in contradiction to the absolute Nature of Things: Nor is it any more possible, that a Being of infinite Justice, Goodness, and Truth, should do any thing unjustly, unrighteously, or falsely; than that a Thing should be and not be at the same time. The

Rectitude



*Reſtitute* of his *Will*, is as unalterable, SERM.  
as the *Necceſſity* of his *Nature*: and 'tis as IX.  
truly a contradiction, that the *Will* of an  
infinitely *Good* Being, ſhould *abuse* to do  
any thing contrary to *Right*; as that the  
*Power* of an infinitely *powerful* Being,  
ſhould be *able* to do any thing inconſiſtent  
with *Power*. For in like manner as 'tis  
for *This Reason* manifeſt, that infinite  
Power cannot extend to *natural* contra-  
dictions, *becauſe* they imply a deſtruction  
of *that very Power*, by which they muſt  
be ſuppoſed to be worked; ſo 'tis alſo  
for *the like reaſon* evident, that the ſame  
infinite Power cannot extend to *moral*  
contradictions, *becauſe* Theſe imply a de-  
ſtruction of ſome *other Attributes*, as ne-  
ceſſarily belonging to the divine Nature as  
Power.

IV. THUS have I endeavoured briefly,  
1<sup>ſt</sup>, to prove, that God *muſt* of neceſſity  
be all-powerful; 2<sup>dly</sup>, to give ſome ge-  
neral and inadequate idea, *wherein* the  
Perfection of this Power *conſiſts*; and  
3<sup>dly</sup>, to ſhow what *particulars* are *not*  
*included*, in the true Notion even of Om-  
nipotence *itſelf*. What remains, is, to  
draw ſome uſeful *Inferences* from the ſe-  
veral

SERMON. veral parts, of the foregoing Discourse

IX. And these inferences will be of two sorts;  
 1<sup>st</sup>, such as may assist us to make a right  
 judgment of the Truth or Falshood of  
 several *Doctrines* which have been taught  
 in Divinity; And 2<sup>dly</sup>, such as may tend  
 more immediately to direct and influence  
 our *Practise*. But the consideration of  
 These, must be referred to a following  
 opportunity.



SERMON



# S E R M O N X.

## *Of the OMNIPOTENCE of G O D.*



P S A L. cxlvii. 5.

*Great is our Lord, and Great is  
his Power.*



**I**N a former discourse upon S E R M.  
these words, I proposed 1<sup>st</sup>, X.  
to endeavour to show, that  
God *must* of necessity be All-  
powerful: 2<sup>dly</sup>, to give some  
faint hints and representations, some ge-  
neral and inadequate idea, *wherein* the  
*Perfection* of this Power consists, and *in*  
*what instances* it has principally displayed  
itself: 3<sup>dly</sup>, to consider *what* particulars  
are

S E R M. are *not included*, in the true Notion even  
 X. of *Omnipotence* itself. And 4thly, to draw  
 some practical *Inferences* from the whole.  
 The *Three first* of these general Heads, I  
 have already gone through. That God  
*must* of necessity be All-powerful, I have  
 shown from *this* consideration, that the  
 Powers of all things that Are, are derived  
 from *Him*, and depend continually upon  
 him. The peculiar *Perfection* wherein  
 this divine Power consists, and the *Instances*  
 wherein it has principally displayed it-  
 self, I have shown to be; it's giving *Be-*  
*ing* originally to *all* things, and its go-  
*verning* them continually while they are  
 in being; its doing all things with abso-  
 lute and perfect *Ease*, without any *diffi-*  
*culty* in *itself*, or *opposition* from any *other*  
 thing; and its doing things perfectly *at*  
*once*, without standing in need of any  
*Time* to do them in. *Lastly*, the particu-  
 lars *not included* in the true Notion even  
 of *Omnipotence* itself, I have shown, are,  
 whatever things are *Contradictory* abso-  
 lutely in their *own Nature*; whatever  
 things are *naturally evil* and imply *weak-*  
*ness* or *imperfection* in the *Being* itself to  
 whom the Power of doing them is ascri-  
 bed;



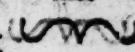
bed; and whatever things are *morally evil* SERM. and imply *injustice or unrighteousness* to- X. wards Others: The Power of doing these things is not included even in Omnipotence itself; and the ascribing to God any such possibility, would not be a *magnifying* but *mocking* his Power.

IV. THAT which remains at this Time, is to draw some useful and proper *Inferences*, from the consideration of this whole Doctrine of the *divine Omnipotence*. And These Inferences, may be of *two* sorts. *First*, such as will assist us to make a right judgment of the Truth or Falshood of several *Doctrines* which have sometimes been taught in Divinity; and *Secondly*, such as may tend more immediately to direct and influence our *Practise*.

I. THOSE Inferences from the Notion of the divine Omnipotence, which may assist us in making a right judgment of the Truth or Falshood of several *Doctrines* that have sometimes been taught in Divinity, are such as follow.

1<sup>st</sup>, If the Power of God be absolutely Supreme and Infinite, then 'tis evident that *no Power* can possibly be *contrary* to His, *no Kingdom opposite* to His; any farther

S E R M. ther than He himself, in the infinite and  
 X. unfearchable Wisdom of his Supreme Go-  
 vernment, thinks fit to permit and suffer  
 it *should* be so. When therefore we read  
 of the *Devil's* setting up a Kingdom, in  
 opposition to the Kingdom of God; great  
 care must be taken that we do not so un-  
 derstand it, as if the Devil had, properly  
 speaking, *any Power* against God. But  
 the Meaning is *This* only; that, in like  
 manner as *Wicked Men* set up themselves  
 against God, and resist his *Will*, and ex-  
 alt themselves in opposition to *God's King-*  
*dom*; and yet really have *no Power* at all,  
 any further than God thinks fit to permit  
 them: So *the Devil* likewise opposes the  
 Kingdom and the Will of God, not by any  
*natural*, but by a *moral Power* only; not  
 by being able to resist the Will of God  
 by *Force*, but by being suffered to do  
 things wicked and displeasing to God,  
 through that natural *liberty of chusing and*  
*acting*, which is essential to the Being of  
 a rational Creature. One of the greatest  
 and noblest Effects of God's *creating pow-*  
*er*, is his producing rational Creatures,  
 such as are Angels and Men. Without  
 These, all the rest of the whole Creation

had lost its beauty; because *These only* are S E R M.  
 capable of discerning what That Beauty X.  
 is, and of praising their Creator for it. Yet   
 in order to make them capable of return-  
 ing him this Praise and Adoration wor-  
 thily, by delighting to obey his Com-  
 mands and imitate his Nature; it was es-  
 sentially necessary they should be indued  
 with that Liberty or Freedom of Will,  
 which at the same time that it made them  
 capable of Virtue, could not but make  
 them likewise capable of Vice. Such of  
 them therefore, as abused that Liberty of  
 Will to the Choice of *Wickedness*, (which  
 God gave them on the contrary to make them  
 capable of *Virtue*;) became thereby Ene-  
 mies to God, and Deceivers one of ano-  
 ther. And the opposition they make to  
 God by the Practise of Wickedness, is no  
 other, than what originally by the Free-  
 dom of an intellectual nature it was neces-  
 sary they should be capable of making; and  
 for the preventing of which, it is not pro-  
 per that the absolute Power of God should  
 interpose, before the final day of Retribu-  
 tion. For the Kingdom of God, which  
 wicked men and wicked Spirits set them-  
 selves in opposition to, is not the King-  
 dom

SERM. dom of his *Power*, but his Kingdom of  
 X. *Righteousness*; and the very nature and  
 essence of a Kingdom of *Righteousness*, is,  
 to prevail, not by *Force*, but by the *Victory* of *Virtue* over the opposition and the  
*Deceits* of *Wickedness*. This observation  
 may be of considerable *Use*, both for the  
 right apprehending the nature of God's  
 Supreme Government, and for the true  
 understanding of several parts of *Scripture*.  
 When we read of the Devil's first  
 rebelling against the Almighty, and ex-  
 exalting his throne above the Stars of God,  
 and presuming to be like the most High;  
 for which offence he was cast down from  
 Heaven; 'tis evident the meaning is not,  
 (as some have childishly supposed, or po-  
 etically represented,) that he rebelled a-  
 gainst God, as hoping to prevail by *Force*.  
 No; Those Angelic Spirits, had their  
 Knowledge been but equal to ours, as in-  
 deed it was far superior; but had it been  
 equal only to that of Men, yet they could  
 not possibly have been so absurdly igno-  
 rant, as to imagine that Finite could pre-  
 vail by *Force* against Infinite, or not know  
 that the Almighty could, if he pleased,  
 annihilate them as swift as Thought, and  
 withdraw their very Being from them in

a mo-



a moment, and destroy them for ever S E R M.  
 with the least blast of his mouth. *Force* X.  
 therefore, 'tis evident, they could not  
 think of; But the meaning of the Devil's  
 rebelling, is; that he presumptuously  
 transgressed the Law of the most High;  
 and preferred his own Will, as wicked  
*Men* also do, before the Commandments  
 of God; and probably first deceived him-  
 self with the very same Temptation,  
 wherewith he afterwards deceived our  
 First Parent; *In the day thou dost this  
 Thing, surely thou shalt not die.* We read  
 indeed, *Rev. xii. 7.* that *there was War in  
 Heaven; Michael and his Angels fought  
 against the dragon, and the dragon fought  
 and his Angels; And prevailed not, neither  
 was their place found any more in Heaven;  
 And the great dragon was cast out, that old  
 Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which  
 deceiveth the whole world; and his Angels  
 were cast out with him.* But the meaning  
 of this passage is not literal, as if the De-  
 vil had Power to fight against the Angels  
 or Ministers of God's government; But  
 according to the sublimity and loftiness of  
 the prophetick style, 'tis evident it must  
 be understood as a highly figurative de-  
 scription

S E R M. description, how wonderfully the Gospel  
 X. of Christ prevailed in the primitive times,  
 by the courage and constancy of the Mar-  
 tyrs, against *Heathen Idolatry* then pos-  
 sessed of the Powers of the whole Earth.  
 For so the careful and attentive Reader  
 may clearly see it explained in the very  
 next words, *ver. 10. Now is come salva-  
 tion and strength, and the Kingdom of our  
 God, and the Power of his Christ; For the  
 Accuser of our Brethren is cast down;*  
 ----- *And they overcame him by the Blood  
 of the Lamb, and by the word of their Te-  
 stimony; and they loved not their lives un-  
 to the Death.* 'Tis therefore a great Er-  
 ror in good men, to magnify the Power of  
 the Devil (as has sometimes been done)  
 to such a degree, as to become either an  
*Objection* against the Truth of Religion,  
 or too great a *Discouragement* in the pra-  
 ctise of it: Whereas on the contrary our  
 Saviour declares to his Disciples, *St. Luk.*  
*x. 18. I beheld Satan as Lightning fall  
 from Heaven; Behold, I give unto you  
 Power over all the Power of the Enemy,  
 and nothing shall by any means hurt you:*  
 And *St. Jude* assures us, *ver. 6. that the  
 Angels which kept not their first estate, but*

left their own habitation, he hath reserved S E R M.  
X.  
in everlasting chains under darkness, unto  
the judgment of the great day: And St. Paul

hath taught us, 1 Cor. x. 13. that God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above That we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it: And St. James accordingly exhorts, ch. iv. 7.

Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.

The apprehension therefore that many melancholy pious persons have sometimes entertained, of the great Power of the Devil; is very erroneous and groundless.

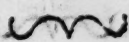
But 'tis a much greater Fault in *bad* men, to magnify the Devil's power, as they are very apt to do, in order to excuse their own Crimes: As if, because the Devil tempted them to do ill Things, therefore the doing those ill things was a less fault in themselves. Which is an Error arising

from a very false Notion of the Devil's temptations. For had the Devil any Power at all over mens Will or Actions, it would indeed be, if not an Excuse for their Wickedness, yet at least an extenuation of it in the Sight both of God and Man, to be able to allege they were



S E R M. influenced by some superiour Power. But  
 X. if the Devil's power of tempting men,  
 be nothing more, but like that of wicked  
*mens* tempting one another; *viz.* the set-  
 ting before them *opportunities* of doing  
 evil, and representing to them the unright-  
 eous *pleasure or profit* they may be ma-  
 sters of thereby; 'tis evident this is no  
 excuse, for a man to allege in his own be-  
 half, that he *did* a wicked action, because  
 a fair *opportunity* of doing it was laid be-  
 fore him, or because he saw it would  
 bring him some *pleasure or profit*. And  
 yet This is plainly all the Power the De-  
 vil generally has over Men. *Let no man*  
*say* (says St James) *when he is tempted,*  
*I am tempted of God*; that is, let no man  
 think that God permits the Devil to have  
 properly any Power or Influence over  
 him; For *every man* (saith he) *is then*  
*only tempted, when he is drawn away of*  
*his own Lust and enticed,* Jam. i. 13. The  
 Devil *did* indeed enter into Judas, when  
 he resolved to betray our Saviour; but  
 'twas the Covetousness of his own Heart  
 only, that gave him admission. And St  
 Paul tells us of persons in *the snare of the*  
*devil, who are taken captive by him at his*  
*Will;*



Will; but 'tis because they are slaves by S E R M.  
 their own consent, to those *Habits* of X.  
*Wickedness* which are the snares of the   
 Devil. And 'twas *Satan* filled *Ananias's*  
 heart to lye to the Holy Ghost; yet this  
 in Scripture is so far from being esteemed  
 an *Excuse*, that on the contrary the Apo-  
 stle urges it as an *aggravation* of his Crime;  
*Why* has Satan filled thine Heart? *why* have  
 you been so wicked, as to commit so abo-  
 minable a Crime, which you *knew* could  
 be nothing but a suggestion of the Devil.

WHAT has been said upon This Head,  
 will hold yet *more* strongly, against that  
 still *more* absurd and wicked opinion,  
 taught by some Antient Corrupters of Re-  
 ligion in the primitive Times, called by  
 the name of *Manichees*: Who from the  
 Many Evils and Wickednesses which are  
 in the World, concluded there was a *Sup-*  
*reme Evil Principle*, originally opposite  
 unto, and independent upon, the Power  
 of God. Which blasphemous opinion,  
 was first taught by the *Persian* Philoso-  
 phers, who called the Good Principle *Light*,  
 and the Evil Principle *Darkness*. Zoroas-  
 tres, &c.  
 And against This absurd opinion it is,  
 that *Isaias* in his Prophecy to *Cyrus* King

SERM. of *Perſia*, (*Iſ. xlv. 6, 7.*) thus declares;

X. *I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the Light, and create Darkneſs; I make peace, and create Evil; I the Lord, do all theſe things,* That is; Thoſe Powers, which the *Perſians* looked upon as original Supreme Principles of Good and Evil, calling them by the figurative Name of *Light and Darkneſs*, are nothing but the Creatures of God, acting always either by *His* appointment, or at leaſt by his Permiſſion; and there is *No Power* independent upon *His*. If it be here asked; ſince God is the Supreme Infinite Good, and there is no Power independent upon *His*; why then are not *all* things made good? for, *who hath reſiſted his Will?* the Answer has already been given in part; that Freedom of Will, is eſſential to the Being of rational Creatures; So that Absolute Power overruling that Freedom, would be deſtroying that Nature which it had created; And therefore That poſſibility of Evil, which is conſequent upon Freedom, is reaſonable to be permitted. And This holds, both with regard to Evil *Spirits* and Evil *Men*. But then, with regard to *Men*, it may ſtill further be answered; that,

that, besides its being inconsistent with S E R M.  
 moral government to overrule their Wills X.  
 by Power, there arises moreover from   
 those Evils, which could not reasonably  
 be prevented, a various manifestation of  
 the *Wisdom of God* in bringing Good fre-  
 quently out of Evil, of the *Mercy and*  
*Goodness and Compassion of God* in bearing  
 with Sinners unto Repentance, and finally  
 of the *Justice of God* in destroying those  
 who will by no means be amended. And  
 This is the Answer St Paul gives to a  
 like difficulty, *Rom. ix. 22. What if God,*  
*willing to show his Wrath, and to make his*  
*Power known, indured with much long-*  
*suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to de-*  
*struction? fitted to destruction, by their own*  
*Wickedness; yet, at the same time, indured*  
*on God's part with much long-suffering,*  
*that they might have space of Repentance.*

2dly, FROM what was said concerning  
 the *Extent* of the divine Power, that it  
 must by no means be understood as in-  
 cluding a Possibility of working *Contra-*  
*dictions*; the *Inference* naturally to be  
 drawn, is, that we ought to lay it down  
 as a *Rule*, always to reject with indigna-  
 tion, those who would impose upon our  
 Faith

S E R M. *Faith any plain Impossibilities, under colour and pretense of the Omnipotence of God. For if Contradictions really destroy themselves, and are Nothing; and a Power of working them, is but a Power of doing nothing; and consequently the ascribing to God any such Power, is not magnifying, but mocking his Omnipotence; it follows plainly, that whosoever indeavours to impose any such thing on mens Faith, howsoever in words he may pretend to exalt and think highly of the divine Power, yet in reality he does but reproach the Reason of Mankind, and turn Religion into Ridicule. For if the Religion a man teaches, be confessedly unreasonable; with what Arguments can he apply seriously to Another man's Reason to believe and embrace it? And if it be repugnant to the Attributes of God; what Authority can be able to support it? The Effect of such Doctrines is nothing else, but exposing ourselves to the Scorn of Unbelievers; and giving too just occasion to Atheistical and profane Spirits, to blaspheme the Sacred Names of God and Religion. Of This nature is the doctrine of Transubstantiation; that great Reproach*



Reproach of the Common Sense of Men; S E R M,  
and great Profanation of that divine At- X.  
tribute, the Omnipotence of God. And of

the same Nature and Tendency in proportion, are all false and foolish Explications of the plain and true doctrines of Religion; Such Explications, as are frequently to be found in subtle and scholastick writers, and sometimes in Others from whom such things should not be expected; which make religion unintelligible, and consequently not really and heartily believed, even by those who Themselves fancy that they do believe it. For nothing influences mens *practise*, but what they understand: And whatever religion has no effectual influence upon the constant course of men's Lives and Actions, to establish Virtue, Righteousness and Charity in their whole behaviour; is a Religion for which men are certainly nothing the better, and may very possibly be much the worse.

3dly, If the Power of doing *Evil*, be not included in the true Notion of Omnipotence; then from hence we may learn not to regard such Doctrines, as, under pretense of God's Sovereignty, supreme uncontroulable dominion, and absolute

S E R M. solute Power, assert *hard* things concern-  
 X. ing him, *inconsistent* with his moral Per-  
 fections. Of This kind, are all those  
 Doctrines, which make God the Author  
 of *Sin and Death*: The Doctrines of ab-  
 solute *Predestination* and *unconditionate*  
*Decrees*; the Doctrines which subject  
*Men* to unavoidable *Fatality*, and repre-  
 sent God capable of the greatest *Cruelty*.  
 These Doctrines must of necessity be  
 false. And the Scriptures upon which they  
 are built, though to the careful Reader  
 they have plainly enough another mean-  
 ing, yet even if we could not tell how to  
 interpret them otherwise, we might ne-  
 vertheless be certain that their sense was  
 mistaken; because we are beforehand sure  
 from the nature of God, that 'tis altoge-  
 ther as impossible for him to do what is  
*Evil or Unjust*, as to be able to work even  
*Contradictions themselves*. The Authors  
 of the contrary Opinion allege, that  
 whatever God does, is *therefore Just and*  
*Good*, because *He* does it. Which is in-  
 deed very true: But not, unless it be  
 rightly understood. For the meaning of  
 that Assertion, is not, that the nature of  
 Things would be altered by God's acting  
 otherwise

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otherwise than he does; or that What SERM.  
is Evil and Unjust would become Just X  
and Good by supposing God to do it; W  
but the right meaning of it is, that  
because from our Knowledge of the di-  
vine Attributes we are beforehand Sure  
in general that God will do nothing  
but what is in itself Just and Good,  
therefore whenever we know of any thing  
in particular that God does it, we may  
safely from thence and for that reason de-  
pend upon it, that the Thing is in its  
own Nature Just and Good; for that  
otherwise, He would not have done it.  
But now if men hence take occasion to  
contend, that things in their own Nature  
hard and unrighteous, may, by being as-  
cribed to God, be taught and defended;  
what is this, but abusing mens Reason  
with a pretense of God's absolute Power  
and Dominion? As if, because what a  
known just man or just governour at any  
time does, may well be depended upon to  
be in itself a just Thing; therefore, tho'  
such a Person should change his character,  
and do a thing plainly unjust, it might  
still be imagined to follow that it was  
justly and rightly done. Is not this plain-  
ly



S E R M. ly, *speaking deceitfully for God*; and having recourse to his Supremacy and Omnipotence, to destroy all the other Perfections of the divine Nature? The Foundation of all erroneous opinions in these Matters, is the Notion of *Dominion's* being founded in *Power*, and that *Omnipotence only* is the Ground of God's *absolute Right* over his Creatures. But the Falsity of this Notion appears from hence, that if *Power* was the Measure of *Right*, it would follow that all the other Perfections of God were of no moment; and that, whatever the worst Being in the World did, provided he had but absolute Power, would be as just and righteous as the Actions of the All-merciful and Good God: Which is manifest Blaphemy. The Truth therefore is evidently This: In things merely *positive*, which in their own nature are neither good nor evil, *Dominion or Power* is indeed the Foundation of *Right*; and *Superiour Authority* is the only Measure, by which the *Fitness or Goodness* of such things is to be judged of. But matters of *Moral* consideration, derive their Goodness or Badness, not from *Will or Power*, but from the



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the unchangeable nature of Things themselves; from that eternal Reason, the unalterable conformity to which, is one of the principal internal Perfections of the divine Nature; And therefore in these things, the Power of God ought no more to be conceived capable of making Evil Good, then in natural things it can be imagined to produce Contradictions. If This were not the case, any sort of Wickedness might come to be taught under pretense of Religion.

But II. THERE is another sort of Inference to be drawn from the consideration of the Divine Omnipotence; which may still more immediately influence and direct our *Practise*. And

1<sup>st</sup>, IF God has infinite and irresistible Power, hence arises an evident necessity of fearing and obeying him. The Rule indeed of his Government, is not Power; but Equity. But as his Commands are always in themselves Just and Righteous, so his Power will exact Obedience to those Commands. There is one Law-giver, (says the Apostle, St James iv. 12.) who is able to save and to destroy.

2dly,

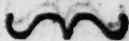
S E R M.

2dly. To wicked men therefore, who

X.

have lived in disobedience to the Laws of God, presumptuously and impenitently; the consideration of the Greatness of the Divine Power, is just matter of Terror. Ps. xc. 11. *Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger?* And the Apostle, Heb. x. 31. *It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God:* And our Saviour himself, St Luke xii. 5. *I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear; Fear Him, who, after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.* The most enormous Offenders, may possibly escape the Punishment of Men, and evade the stroke of human Justice; They may perhaps conceal their Crimes from the Eye of the World, or, by Number or Strength be too great to be punished by any temporal Authority. But from the Power of God, there is no escaping; from His Justice, there is no appeal; from His Wrath, no Strength, no Fraud, no Policy, no Wisdom or Artifice can deliver them. This therefore is a very strong Argument, to perswade wicked men to Repentance; that they may appease His Wrath, whose Power they cannot

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not resist; and become Objects of his S E R M.  
*Mercy*, from whose *Justice* otherwise X.  
there is no escaping. 

3dly, THE consideration of the Greatness of the Divine Power, is a sure ground of *Trust and Confidence* to virtuous and good men, at all times and under all distresses. *Pf. lxi. 8. O put your trust in God always, ye people; pour out your hearts before him, for he is our hope: --- God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same, that Power belongeth unto God. And Pf. xci. 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty; --- Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisom pestilence; --- Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by day; For the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. This is also excellently expressed in the book of Job, ch. v. 19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee; In famine he shall redeem thee from Death, and in War from the Power of the Sword: --- At destruction and famine*  
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S E R M. *thou shalt laugh, neither shalt thou be afraid of the Beasts of the Earth; For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the Beasts of the field shall be at Peace with thee. And by the Prophet Habukkuk, ch. iii. 17, Tho' the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines; tho' the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; tho' the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. All the afflictions and calamities of This World, may possibly in the course of things, fall upon the best of Men; but he that made the World, is their defense and deliverance. Oppressors and Tyrants, may hate and persecute them for a time; But mortal men, whose breath is in their nostrils, wherein are they to be accounted of? For God breaketh the Arms of the Mighty, and bringeth the Counsel of the Wicked to nought. The Devil may assault them with variety of Temptations, and stir up against them all the Enemies of God and Virtue; But God is infinitely superiour to all the Powers of Wickedness, and has*

*reserved*



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reserved those Apostate Spirits in chains S E R M.  
under Darkneſs, unto the judgment of the X.

great Day. Such perſons, ſaith our Sa-  
viour, *ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall Any  
pluck them out of my hand; For my Fa-  
ther which gave them me, is greater then  
all,* Joh. x. 28. And St Paul, 2 Tim. i.

12. *I know, ſays he, whom I have belie-  
ved, and I am perſwaded that he is able to  
keep that which I have committed unto  
him, againſt That day.* This is That  
Faith and Truſt in God, for which the  
Patriarch *Abraham* is ſo juſtly commend-  
ed, Rom. iv. 17. *Who, relying on God  
who quickneth the dead, and calleth thoſe  
things which be not as tho' they were; A-  
gainſt Hope, believed in Hope; and-----  
ſtaggered not at the Promise of God thro'  
Unbelief; but was ſtrong in Faith, giving  
Glory to God; and being fully perſwaded,  
that What he had promiſed, he was Able  
alſo to perform.* And Heb. xi. 8, 10,

17, 19. *By Faith Abraham when he was  
called,-----went out, not knowing whe-  
ther he went; and ſojourned in the land of  
Promise as in a ſtrange country;----for  
he looked for a City which hath foundati-  
ons, whoſe Builder and Maker is God.-----*

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By

S E R M. By Faith, when he was tried,-----he offered up his only begotten Son;---accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he had received him in a figure; (He had before received him from the dead in a figure; that is, the Birth of his Son in his old age, when his own body was now already as good as dead, was even as great a Miracle, as That which he afterwards expected, of his being raised again.) This also is That Faith of Moses, ver. 24. by which, when he was come to years, he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of reward, ---and indured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Heb. xi.  
12. and  
Rom. iv.  
19.

4thly and Lastly; T H E consideration of the Omnipotence of God, ought to teach vain Mortals Humility, and that the Potsherds of the Earth (as the Prophet elegantly stiles men) should not proudly insult and domineer over each other. Pride was not made for Man, nor furious Anger

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*Anger for them that are born of a Woman,* SERM.  
Ecclus. x. 18. Whatever power any man X.  
has, he received it from God; and God,   
who gave That Power, is infinitely Higher  
than All; Nay, the meanest ministring  
Spirit in the Armies of the Angels of  
God, is far superiour to all the Power of  
all the Potentates of the Earth together.  
Yet even *God Himself*, uses not arbitrary  
and absolute Power to Evil; nor does  
wrong, even to the meanest of his crea-  
tures. *Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings,*  
Pf. ii. 10. *be instructed, ye that are Judges*  
*of the Earth.* For 'tis the greatest Glo-  
ry of the greatest Men, to imitate in This  
Particular the Great King and Sovereign  
of the Universe.



Of the Omnipotence of G. O. D.

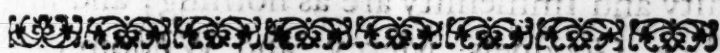
I have been thinking of you very much lately, and  
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are  
 well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but  
 I have managed to find some time to write to you.  
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# S E R M O N X I.

*Of the OMNISCIENCE of  
G O D.*



J O B xxxvii. 16. last part.

*Of Him that is perfect in Know-  
ledge.*



THESE words are a Declara-  
tion of that Divine Attribute, S E R M. XI.  
the Perfection of *Knowledge*.

In discoursing upon which  
Subject, I shall 1<sup>st</sup> endeavour  
to prove plainly and intelligibly, that God  
who is the Governour and Judge of all,  
*must* be a Being indued with *perfect Know-  
ledge*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall offer some Observa-  
tions concerning the *particular Nature  
and Circumstances* of the divine Know-  
ledge.

S E R M. ledge. And 3dly, I shall make some *practical*  
 XI. *Reflections* upon the whole.

I. In order to prove plainly and intelligibly, that God is a Being which must of *Necessity* be indued with *perfect Knowledge*; 'tis to be observed, that *Knowledge* is a Perfection, without which the *foregoing* Attributes are no Perfections at all, and without which *those which follow* can have no Foundation. Where there is no *Knowledge*, Eternity and Immensity are as nothing; and Justice, Goodness, Mercy, and Wisdom can have no place. The Idea of *Eternity and Omnipresence* devoid of *Knowledge*, is as the Notion of *Darkness* compared with That of *Light*; 'tis as a Notion of the *World*, without the Sun to illuminate it; 'tis as the Notion of *inanimate Matter*, (which is the Atheists supreme Cause,) compared with That of *Life and Spirit*. And as for the *following* Attributes, *Justice, Goodness, Mercy, and Wisdom*; 'tis evident that, without *Knowledge*, there could not *possibly* be any such thing as These *at all*.

AGAIN: That God *must* be himself a Being indued with *perfect Knowledge*, appears from his having to *other* Beings communicated certain degrees of that Perfection.

## Of the Omniscience of GOD.

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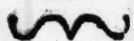
fection. For whatever Perfection is in any *Effect*, must of Necessity have been *much more*, in the *Cause* that produced it. Nothing can give to *Another*, that which it hath not *itself*: And therefore from the Figure and Motion, from the Compositions and Divisions of lifeless Matter, 'tis evident nothing could ever have arisen, *but* lifeless Matter. Wherefore since in Created Beings there *are* many degrees of *Knowledge*, it follows necessarily that the *Perfection of Knowledge*, must be in Him that created them: *Pf. xciv. 8. Ye Fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the Ear, shall He not bear? He that formed the Eye, shall He not see? --- he that teaches man Knowledge, shall not He know?* In the case of *Imperfections* indeed, the Argument lies *otherwise*: These *may be* in the Effect, tho' they were *not* in the Cause: And the reason is evident; Because tho' nothing can give what it has not, yet any cause may forbear to give *all* that it has; Tho' nothing can communicate *more*, than it has itself; yet it may communicate as much *less*, as it pleases. Finiteness therefore, which is but a Negation; and all the consequences of being

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being Finite, such as Figure, Motion, Composition, Division, and the like; *may* be in the Creature, tho' they are not in the Creator. But whatsoever is a real positive Perfection, as *Knowledge* is; *must* have been first and perfect in the original Cause, or else it could never have been transmitted to any thing that was produced.

Lastly, to conclude this First Head, as needing not much enlargement; From the *Immensify* or *Omnipresence* of God, may the same Truth be likewise clearly evinced: For from thence it follows, if he is an Intelligent Being at all, (as has already been proved by the foregoing Arguments;) it follows, I say, from his *Omnipresence*, that his *Knowledge must be* Infinite and Perfect. For where-ever *Himself* is, his *Knowledge* is, which is inseparable from his Being, and must therefore be *infinite*; And where-ever his infinite *Knowledge* is, 'tis plain it must necessarily have a thorough prospect of the inmost nature and essence of every thing; so that nothing can be concealed from his Inspection.

HAVING



HAVING thus briefly proved, that God S E R M.  
must of Necessity be a Being indued with XI.  
*perfect Knowledge*; I proceed now in the

II<sup>d</sup> place, To offer some Observations,  
concerning the *particular Nature and*  
*Circumstances* of this divine Knowledge.  
And this I shall do distinctly, with regard  
to the *Object*, the *Manner*, and the *Cer-*  
*tainty* of this Knowledge.

1<sup>st</sup>, WITH regard to the *Object*: 'Tis  
a Knowledge of *All* things absolutely,  
without exception. Our Knowledge and  
comprehension of things, is short as our  
Duration, and narrow as our Extent.  
Our *Senses* inform us of the Surfaces and  
external Properties of a *few* things, with-  
in the reach of our imperfect Organs.  
Our *Reason* leads us a little further, to  
the Knowledge of some few *more* things  
than our Senses take in, and to the Dis-  
covery of some few of the inward and  
more hidden Properties of the things a-  
bout us. Our *Imagination and Conje-*  
*ctures* extend a little further yet, to a  
*greater Number* of Things; but with  
more Uncertainty, and less Distinctness.  
*Angels*, according to the greater Activity  
of their Nature, and higher Perfection of  
their

SERM. their Faculties, comprehend still *more*  
 XI. things than We; more in number, and  
 with a more clear insight; yet limited  
 and bounded as strictly within *their* proper Sphere, as *we* within *ours*. But the Knowledge of God, is absolutely unlimited, and perfectly universal; infinite as his Duration, and boundless as his Immensity; extending to all things every where, without exception; and to all the Properties and Powers of things, without restriction.

BUT, to be more particular: The Knowledge of God, with respect to the *Object* of it, is a Knowledge of all the *Actions* of Men; a Knowledge of all their *Thoughts and Intentions*; a Knowledge of what seems yet more difficult, even of *future and contingent Events*.

THE most obvious, the first, and most manifest Object of the divine Knowledge, is, *All the Actions of All Men.* Prov. v. 21. *The ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings*: and Job xxxiv. 21. *His eyes are upon the ways of Man, and he seeth all his goings.* We behold, but a *small* part of each other's behaviour; and can observe  
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only a *few* of the Actions, even of those S E R M.  
with whom we converse most intimately. XI.

But God sees *all* the Actions of every man, and compares and weighs them together; and cannot by *one part* of our behaviour, be led into any false judgment concerning any *other* part of it. He understands the *Quality and Circumstances* of every Action, and exactly observes every *degree* of Good or of Evil in it; even degrees as secret and imperceptible to *Us*, or which *we* may be apt to fancy of as small importance, as the falling of a sparrow to the Earth, or a hair of our head falling short in number. And This Exactness of Knowledge, is necessary to the Judge of all the Earth, in order to his doing that which is right, in the final decision of mens eternal state; where every the least variation in the degree of Happiness or Misery, cannot but be of the utmost importance, because it will be from thenceforth unchangeable and everlasting. *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. xii. 14. And Luk. xii. 2, 3. There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed;*

S E R M. revealed; neither hid, that shall not be  
 XI. known: Whatsoever ye have spoken in dark-  
 ness, shall be heard in the light; and that  
 which ye have spoken in the ear in closets,  
 shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.  
 And 1 Tim. v. 24, 25. Some mens Sins are  
 open beforehand, going before unto judg-  
 ment; and some men, they follow after:  
 Likewise also the good works of some, are  
 manifest beforehand; and they that are  
 otherwise cannot be hid. They that are  
 otherwise, cannot be hid; That is; Not,  
 as it is generally understood, those works  
 that are otherwise than good, cannot be  
 hid; For That is what was affirmed in the  
 foregoing verse: But the meaning is;  
 those good works, which are not now ma-  
 nifest, yet shall not always be hid: For  
 so the Apostle's similitude, is compleat  
 and elegant: As some mens sins are open  
 before-hand, and others they follow af-  
 ter; so also the good works of some, are  
 manifest before-hand; and those good  
 works which are now otherwise, which  
 are now not manifest, yet shall not always  
 be hid. This exactness of the divine  
 Knowledge, in order to the final and uni-  
 versal judgment, is elegantly described in  
 Scripture



Scripture by that figurative expression, of *S E R M.*  
Men's Actions being all written in a Book; *XI.*

*Pf. lvi. 8. Thou tellest my wandrings;—*

*Are they not written in thy Book? Mal. iii.*

*16. The Lord hearkned and heard it, and*

*a Book of Remembrance was written before*

*him, for them that feared the Lord, and*

*that thought upon his Name. Dan. vii. 10.*

*The judgment was set, and the Books were*

*opened. And Rev. xx. 12. The Books*

*were opened,——and the dead were judged*

*out of those things that were written in the*

*Books, according to their works. The*

*meaning of all these places is, that every*

*action of every man, is more certainly*

*known to God, and remembered unto*

*judgment; than things are made certain*

*to be remembered among men; by being*

*written down in Books. And from*

*hence it appears, that mens names being*

*written in the book of life from the foun-*

*dation of the World, does not signify their*

*being predestinated by an absolute decree*

*to eternal Life; but their being recorded*

*before God in all ages from the begin-*

*ning, as those who are judged worthy of*

*eternal Life. For when a good man turns*

*wicked, God threatens to blot his Name*

*out*

SERM. out of his Book, Rev. iii. 5. Which

XI. could not possibly be, if it was meant of an absolute Predestination. And on the contrary, *Acts* iii. 19. the Sins of them that repent, are said to be *blotted out*; that is, they shall not appear or be remembered against them in judgment. And This concerning the *Actions* of Men.

THE next, and more wonderful, Object of the divine Knowledge, is, the *Hearts, the Thoughts and Intentions* of Men. We, and perhaps all created Beings, can judge of Persons, Only by their words and actions, and by the outward appearances in their behaviour: But God, is a *Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*. 1 Chr. xxviii. 9. *The Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts*. And 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *The Lord seeth not as Man seeth; For Man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the Heart*. Where-ever we are, he is always with us, and surrounds us with his boundless presence; he includes and penetrates every part of our Substance, sees into our inmost Thoughts and Pur-

Heb. iv.  
12.

poses, and searches the most secret recesses of our Hearts and Souls, with his unerring and all-seeing Eye. And *This* also is a Power necessary, in order to his judging the World with Equity. For Wickedness lies in the *Heart*, as well as in the *Actions*; And, *Thou shalt not covet*, is a Command, as well as *Thou shalt not do ill*. *Whosoever* looketh on a woman to lust after her, that is, with an ill intention, tho' without opportunity of any sinful act; hath already (saith our Saviour) committed adultery with her in his heart, Mat. v. 28. And ch. xv. 19. Out of the Heart, saith he, proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, False-witness, Blasphemies. In order therefore to the passing a righteous judgment concerning men's final state, 'tis necessary that the Judge be able to search the Hearts. And both Scripture and Reason, and the just and unavoidable Fears of ill-designing men, do sufficiently bear testimony to the Truth of the doctrine, that God is able to do *This* infallibly and without Error. Nay there are cases, wherein the Heart being deceitful, not only to others, but even to a man's *self*.

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also by secret partiality and imperceptible prejudices; no perfect and unerring judgment can be made of a man by *any other*, than by God only. 1 Cor. iv. 4. *yea, I judge not mine own self, saith St Paul; For I know nothing by myself, (I am not conscious of any thing to myself, so the words ought to be rendred;) yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. And 1 Job. iii. 20. If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.*

BUT there is a further, and still more wonderful Object of the Divine Knowledge, than even the Hearts or Thoughts of Men; and That is, *Future Events*. He that gave all things those Powers and Faculties which they enjoy, must be acknowledged to foresee what each of those Powers and Faculties will produce; and, thro' an infinite series of Causes, perceive at one View all things that ever *shall be*, as if they *at present were*. Even the most contingent Futurities, the actions of free Agents, cannot be conceived to be hidden from *his* foresight, who gave to his Creatures those very Powers of Will and Choice, by which they are free agents.

*Known*



Known unto God are all his works, from SERM.  
the Beginning of the World, Acts xv. 18. XI.

The many predictions of future events, which have been in the World; were convincing evidences of the Truth of this Attribute, to the heathen philosophers; And even the common reason of the vulgar taught them, that it could not be imagined, that the Knowledge of the infinite and eternal God, should be in any respect finite. There is in this Matter, one Difficulty only, which has in all Ages employed the Speculation of considering persons: Namely the following question, *How Fore-knowledge in God, can be consistent with Liberty of Action in Men.* In order to remove which difficulty, it may not be improper to premise two things; 1st, That our finite Understandings may very reasonably be allowed, not to be able to comprehend all the ways of infinite Knowledge; Job xi. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as High as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper then Hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* But

S E R M. This Acknowledgment of the Incompre-  
 XI. henfibility of the Ways of God, must  
 always be understood with relation to  
 such things only, as do not imply any ex-  
 press Contradiction: For whenever *That*  
 is the case, it cannot be said concerning  
*such* things, that they are incomprehen-  
 sible, or what we cannot understand; but  
 on the contrary, that they *are such* things  
 which we *do* clearly and distinctly un-  
 derstand, that they cannot possibly *be*:  
 The necessary Falsity of all *Such* things  
 being as clear to our Understandings,  
 as the self-evidence of the plainest Truths.  
 Also, it must be observed, that this ac-  
 knowledgment ought to be understood  
*only* of things *expressly revealed*, not of  
 any *humane* doctrines.

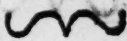
2dly, IT is further necessary to premise,  
 that in the matter before us, the Question  
 is not, *whether Mens Actions be Free*; but  
*whether or no, and How, that Freedom of Ac-*  
*tion, which makes Men to be Men, can be*  
*consistent with Fore-knowledge of such Acti-*  
*ons*. For if these two things were really in-  
 consistent, and could by no means be recon-  
 ciled; it would follow, not, that *Mens*  
*Actions were not Free*; (for That would  
 2 destroy

destroy *All* religion, and take away *all* S E R M.  
the moral Attributes of God at once;) XL.

But on the other side it would follow that  
*such free Actions* as *Mens* are, and without  
which Rational Creatures could not be  
Rational Creatures, were not the Objects  
of the Divine Fore-knowledge. And in  
such case, it would be no more a Diminu-  
tion of God's *Omniscience*, not to *know*  
things impossible and contradictory to be  
known; than 'tis a diminution of his  
*Omnipotence*, not to be able to *do* things  
impossible and contradictory to be  
done. But This is *not* the Case: For,  
these two things being premised, we may  
Now to the Difficulty itself, *How Fore-*  
*knowledge in God can be consistent with*  
*Liberty of Action in Men*, answer direct-  
ly; that they *are therefore* consistent, be-  
cause Fore-knowledge has *no Influence at all*  
upon the Things fore-known; and it has  
*therefore* no Influence upon them, because  
Things would be just as they Are, and no  
otherwise, tho' there was no Fore-know-  
ledge. Fore-knowledge, does not cause  
things to be; but Things that are to be  
hereafter, whether necessarily or freely,  
are the cause of its being fore-known that  
S 3 they

S E R M. they *shall* so, whether necessarily or freely, be. The *Futurity* of free Actions, is exactly the *same*, and, in the nature of things themselves, of the like *certainty* in *Event*, whether they *can*, or *could not* be, fore-known. And as *Our* knowing a thing to be, when we see it is; does not hinder an Action from being *Free*, notwithstanding that it is then certain and cannot *but* be, when it is : so God's *fore-seeing*, that any Action will freely be done ; does not at all hinder its being *Free*, tho' he knows it *certainly*; because *His Fore-seeing* things to come, does no more influence or alter the Nature of things, then our *seeing* them when they are. The *Manner* of God's knowing *future free Actions*, must not indeed be, like his Fore-knowledge of things *necessary*; I say, it must not be by foreseeing a continued *Chain of Causes*; For That would indeed destroy their Freedom: But it must be a Power, quite of another kind: A Power, whereof we can only have an obscure glimpse, in some such manner as That which follows. What *one man* will freely do upon any particular occasion, *another man* by observation and attention may

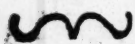


may in some measure judge ; and the wi- S E R M.  
fer the person be, who makes the observa- XI.  
tion, the more probable will his Judgment be, and the seldomer will he be deceived. 

An Angel, in the like case, would make a judgment of the future event, as much nearer to Certainty than that of the wisest man, as the Angelic Nature and Faculties are superiour to the humane. In God himself, whose Powers are all in every respect infinitely transcending those of the highest Creatures, *This* Judgment of future free actions, must needs be infallible, that is, as truly certain, (though entirely of a different kind,) as *That* Fore-knowledge which he has of necessary events by seeing their necessary chain of causes. Nor ought it to seem strange, that this divine Fore-knowledge of future *free* Actions, should be entirely of a different Nature, from his Fore-knowledge of *necessary* events. For there is a not unlike distinction, in some *others* also of the divine Attributes. The *Omnipresence* of God, is an Attribute *necessarily* belonging to him, by absolute Necessity of *Nature*, and altogether independent of his Will: The *Goodness* of God is likewise a *necessary*

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Attribute ; yet not in the same manner as his Omnipresence, by a mere absolute necessity of Nature, but by the unalterable Rectitude of his *Will* ; Which is the true reason, why we properly return him *Thanks* for being *Good*, but not for being *Omnipresent*. Thus *Both* are necessary ; and yet by a Necessity of a totally different sort or kind. In like manner the *Fore-knowledge* of God, both That of *Necessity* and that of *free* Events, is in the issue of Things, equally *certain* ; Yet in the one case This Certainty is entirely of a different nature, from That in the other ; It arising in the case of *necessary* events, from God's own fore-appointing a necessary chain of causes to produce those events ; but in the case of *free* events, it arises from, and depends upon, the mere futurity of the things themselves.

To illustrate this matter by an Example. That *Christ should die for the Sins of Men*, God not only foreknew, but fore-appointed it also, and sent him into the world on purpose for that End. That *Judas should betray our Saviour*, God foreknew, but did not fore-appoint it ; only he chose on purpose into the number of his

his disciples One such person, the wicked-  
ness of whose *own* Heart, he *saw* would  
prompt him to accomplish that Event.

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THAT *Abab* should fall at *Ramoth-Gilead*, God foresaw, and forewarned him of it; yet God's foreknowledge did not make it necessary for him to go up and perish there; but the mere wickedness of his own Will, despising the divine admonition, as it was the only Cause of the Event, so was it likewise the only ground of the Foreknowledge: And had *Abab* been disposed to repent at the Advice of the Prophet, it was in his own Power to have prevented his destruction; and the Foreknowledge of God, would Then have been accordingly, the Foreknowledge of a contrary Event.

THE same may be understood in general concerning *all* exhortations offered to wicked persons, which God beforehand knows that they will not obey. Concerning which if it be inquired, to what purpose then are they offered at all; the unreasonableness of this objection will appear by considering, that according to the same argument, since God knew beforehand *every thing* in the whole Creation, therefore

S E R M. therefore he should never have created any  
 XI. thing at all. The true Answer plainly is:  
 ~~~~~ Whatever is in itself, and in the nature of  
 Things, *reasonable to be done*; 'tis fit *should*
actually be done: And 'tis never the more
 nor the less reasonable, for things being
 known or not known beforehand. The
 reason of God's sending exhortations to
 wicked men, is not that *he himself* is ig-
 norant what they *will* do, but that upon
their own account 'tis reasonable they should
 be so exhorted: And if the thing be rea-
 sonable *in itself*; it cannot *cease* to be so,
 upon the account of Foreknowledge. And
 This, concerning the *Object* or *Extent* of
 the divine Knowledge: 'Tis a Knowledge
 of *all things* absolutely, without exception;
 a Knowledge of all the *Actions* of Men, a
 Knowledge of all their *Thoughts*, a Know-
 ledge of all *future* and even *contingent*
Events.

2dly, WITH regard to the *Manner* of
 this divine Knowledge; tho' it is most un-
 reasonable to imagine we can in any
 measure possibly explain *in particular*, all
 the Ways, Manners, and Circumstances
 of infinite Knowledge; yet some few *ge-*
neral observations, such as these which
 follow,

follow, may be very usefully made by us S E R M.
upon this Head. That the divine Know- .XL.
ledge is not, for instance, as Ours, and
probably that of Angels also, is; a know-
ledge of things *by degrees and parts*; see-
ing we can fix on but one side of a thing,
and consider it only in one view at once;
But 'tis a *perfect* comprehension of every
thing, in all possible respects *at a time*,
and in all possible Circumstances *together*.
Again; it is not, as Ours, and possibly
that of higher Beings than we, only a
superficial and external knowledge of
things, but an *intimate and thorough pro-*
spect of their very inmost nature and es-
sences, all things being *naked and opened*
(as the Apostle expresses it) *to the eyes of*
Him with whom we have to do. Further;
it is not, as Ours, and probably that of
the highest created Beings more or less is,
confused and general; but a *clear, distinct,*
and particular knowledge of every even
the minutest thing or circumstance; a
knowledge, which not *a hair of our head*
escapes, and without which not *a sparrow*
falls to the ground. Lastly, it is not, as
Ours, *acquired with difficulty, considerati-*
on, attention, and study; but a Knowledge
neces-

S E R M. *necessarily and perpetually arising of itself,*
 XI. and inseparable even from the very existence of him whose Essence is Omnipresent. And This briefly with regard to the *Manner* of the divine Knowledge.

3dly, As to the *Certainty* of it, (which was the last Circumstance I proposed to speak to,) I need but just mention, that whereas *Our Knowledge*, (even of those things which we are *well capable* of understanding,) is disturbed and hindred by innumerable causes, by education and prejudice, by temper and interest, by custom, humour, and disorders of mind or body; All which we must constantly endeavour to conquer; and *may* so far do it, as to escape all *fatal* errors, tho' we cannot avoid numberless mistakes: And whereas the Knowledge even of the Highest *Angels*, is always mixed with *some* degree of Uncertainty; as in that remarkable expression of the *Archangel* to *Tobias*, *Moreover I suppose* (says he;) he was not *certain*; but, *I suppose* (saith he) *that she shall bear thee children*† The divine Knowledge on the contrary is in all things absolutely *infallible*, without the *least possibility* of any degree of being *deceived*.

III. It

III. It remains, that I conclude with a SERM.
few Practical Inferences from the whole. XI.

And, 1st, If the divine Knowledge is *perfect*, it is a proper Object of our Admiration and Honour. Of our *Praises* indeed and *Thanksgivings*, his Goodness, Mercy, and Compassion are more properly the Grounds: But to be *admired and adored*, is what every Perfection in the divine Nature equally claims. The *small glimpses* of Knowledge, which appear in *Men*; if they be skilled in languages, that fictitious Learning which arises merely from our Dispersion and Confusions; if they have improved themselves in the study of Philosophy, History, or other Sciences; even *these small glimpses* of Knowledge, cannot but raise in us *some* proportion of Esteem. What Veneration then is due to *Him*, whose Knowledge is in *Himself* infinite, and who is the sole Author of whatever Knowledge is found in *Any Other*. And how should this teach us to think humbly and meanly of ourselves, and of all Creatures, and of all their possible acquirements! to consider, that we *have* and *know* nothing, but what we have received! (*For who has put Wisdom*

SERM. dom in the inward parts? or who has given Understanding to the Heart? Job

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xxxviii. 36. That Knowledge, and all other Faculties in created Beings, not only in Men, but even in the Highest Angels also, are but little Images and Shadows of Perfection; faint and derivative rays of Light, from the incomprehensible fountain of Glory! in comparison of whom, our Knowledge itself is Ignorance, and our Light as Darkness!

2dly, If God knows all, even our most secret actions; then ought we constantly to live under the Power of this Conviction, in all holy and godly conversation, both publickly and in private. 'Twas with great Elegancy, that the antient Heathen Poets described the Sun in the Firmament, as overseeing and beholding all things; but the Description is True, in propriety and strictness of Speech, only of the all-seeing Eye of the Father of Lights. And hence appears the Vanity, of worshipping Saints and Idols, or any other Beings which know not all things. Which Folly *Elijah* excellently ridiculed, when he told the prophets of *Baal*, that their God was pursuing, or talking, or in a journey,

Ἡλίου ὅς
πάντ' ἐφορᾷ
καὶ πάντ'
ἐπαυθεῖ.

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a journey, or perhaps he sleepeth and must be awaked. S E R M.
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3dly, IF God knows, not only our most secret Actions, but also even our *Hearts and Thoughts*; This shows us, the Folly of all *Hypocrisy*; the Obligation, to Purity of Heart; the reasonableness of the Command, *thou shalt not covet*; and the true Comfort of secret unaffected Piety.

4thly, IF God knows all future events, then may we safely depend and trust on his Providence, without being *over-sollicitous* for the time to come. *We* are very apt to covet Riches, Honour, or Power; But *God* sees how perhaps these very things we so earnestly desire, would be hurtful to us; or how ill we should bear it, when perhaps they were again on a sudden taken from us.

FOR the same reason therefore, neither ought we on the contrary to *boast ourselves of to morrow*, for we know not what a day may bring forth; Prov. xxvii. 1. xix. 21. Jam. iv. 13. Nor can wicked men at all excuse themselves, upon account of God's Foreknowledge of their Actions; For it has been before shown, that between these things there is no connexion.

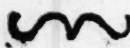
5thly,

Mat. vi.
31, &c.
Nos cæcæ
magna;
cupidine
ducti,
Conjugi-
um peti-
mus par-
tumque
uxoris, at
illis No-
tum qui
pueriqua-
lisque fu-
tura sit
uxor.

Zē Basi-
leū, τὸ μὲν
ἰδίαν καὶ
ἐυχόμενοις
καὶ αἰσού-
τοις Ἀμμο-
δίδε τὰ δὲ
λυγρὰ καὶ
ἐυχόμενοις
ἀπαλλάττει.

S E R M.

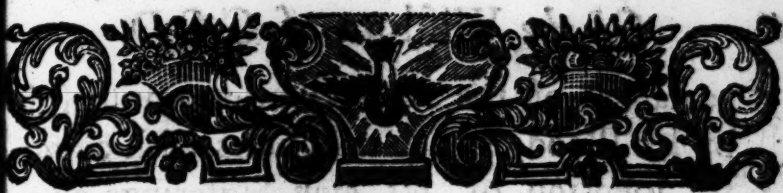
XI.



5thly, IF God *Alone* knows future events, as appears by the prophets challenging false Gods to foretell such events; then hence appears the Wickedness and Folly, of pretending to foreknow things by the Help either of men or Devils. 'Tis observable that no persons are *less careful* to ascribe to God his due Honour, than those who are very ready to ascribe to *other* Powers, to delusive Impostures or Diabolical Artifices, *more* than their due. And God accordingly describes himself, as taking Delight in *frustrating the tokens of the Liars, and making diviners mad, as turning wise men backward, and making their knowledge foolish*, Is. xlv. 25.

Lastly, IF God *Alone* knoweth the Thoughts of men, then neither ought *We* to be forward in judging *others*, any further than their Actions give plain reason so to do; For *who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth*, Rom. xiv. 4; and 1 Cor. iv. 5. neither should we be too much concerned at *Others* judging uncharitably concerning *Us*, if in our Consciences we stand innocent before God, and have not by indiscreet behaviour given men just occasion of offence.

S E R,



SERMON XII.

Of the WISDOM of GOD.



COL. ii. 3.

*In whom are hid all the Treasures
of Wisdom.*



IN the foregoing chapter, the S E R M.
XII.
Apostle having very elo-
quently magnified the *Grace*
(that is, the gracious and
merciful Declarations) of
God in the Gospel, *ver. 6 and 12.* and
having set forth in the loftiest Expressi-
ons the Dignity of the Person of Christ,
ver. 15. and the glorious *Effects* of his
Sufferings, upon those who thro' Repen-
tance and renewed Obedience were made
VOL. I. T partakers

S E R M.
XII.

partakers of the reconciliation purchased by his Blood, v. 21. concludes with a joyful mention of *his own* Sufferings also, after the example of Christ, ver. 24. Of this Gospel, says he, *I Paul was made a Minister, Who now rejoice in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ in my Flesh, for his Bodies sake which is the Church.* The Church of Rome has found, in this expression of the Apostle, the doctrine of the *Merit of the Saints*: For if St Paul filled up that which was behind of the Sufferings of Christ, for his Body the Church; it follows, they think, that the Sufferings of St Paul, must consequently be in proportion a Stock of Merit for the Church. But the real Meaning of the Apostle's words, is very different from what they vainly conceive. For, *to fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ,* does not signify to *complete* any thing that lacked to be *added* after the Sufferings of Christ, as if the Sufferings of Christ were not in point of Merit sufficient of themselves; but it signifies, to *accomplish* that which remained to be *fulfilled* of those prophecies, which foretold

that after the Sufferings of Christ, his S E R M.
 Servants likewise should therein follow his XII.
 example. And these Sufferings of the

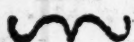
Apostle's, *were also indeed for his Bodies sake which is the Church*; that is, for the Benefit indeed, not of the Church in *future Ages*, by way of *Merit*; but of the Church *then present*, by way of *Example* and *Encouragement* and *bearing Testimony* to the Truth; On which greatly depended the propagation of the Gospel.

IN this 2^d chapter, the Apostle proceeds to express his great *Concern* for the *Colossians*, and his earnest desire of their *Improvement* both in the *Knowledge* and in the *Practice* of Religion; *ver. 1 and 2.* *how great Conflict I have for you,----that your hearts may be ----knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full Assurance of Understanding; to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ; In whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom.*

To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God; that is, to the publick advancement of the Gospel, and of the Glory of God therein manifested; and that all men may acknowledge the mysterious or wonderful

S E R M.

XII.



Love of God towards mankind, Now revealed by the preaching of his Son. The words next following, *of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*, are not rightly rendered; For they sound in that translation, as if *God* and *the Father* were two distinct persons; Whereas they ought to be rendered; *of God, even the Father; and also of Christ*. In whom, adds the Apostle, (summing up his whole Argument by way of Exclamation in the words of the Text,) *are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom*. The word, *In whom*, may by the construction equally be referred, either to *God* or to *Christ*: *God even the Father, and Christ*; in whom, in each or either of whom, *are hid all the treasures of Wisdom*. If it be understood as referring to *God, even the Father*; then it will be a declaration or acknowledgment of his *Wisdom in general*; that He, is the Author and Fountain of *all Wisdom*. But if it be applied to *Christ*; then it must be understood of the *Wisdom of the Gospel in particular*; that in Him was treasured up all *that Wisdom of God*, which was to be manifested to mankind by the Gospel. In *either* way of understanding

Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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standing it, the Sense is not much different; and in *Both*, it is a very useful Subject for our Meditations; *the Wisdom of God more generally, or the Wisdom of God manifested in Christ more particularly.* S E R M.
XII.

WISDOM, is the right Use or Exercise of Knowledge; and differs from Knowledge, as the *Use* of a Power or Faculty differs from the *Faculty itself*. 'Tis therefore, in the divine Nature, a distinct Attribute from that of *Knowledge*; and, as such, I shall accordingly consider it in the following Discourse. And herein, for Method's sake, I shall 1st endeavour to show briefly in general, that God *must* of Necessity be infinitely *Wise*; 2^{dly}, I shall consider more distinctly and in particular, the different *Manifestations* of this divine Wisdom, in his *Works*, in his *Government*, and in his *Laws*: and 3^{dly}, I shall show of what *Use* these Meditations may be unto us in Practise.

I. IN the *First* place, that God must of Necessity be infinitely *Wise*, appears from hence; that, being Himself the Alone original Cause and Author of all things; and knowing what each of their

SERM. Powers and Faculties can produce; and
 XII. seeing at one View all the possible Circumstances and Dispositions of things, all their mutual Relations and Dependencies, all their possible Compositions or Divisions, their Variations and Changes, their Fitness or Suitableness each to certain respective Ends and Purposes; beholding (I say) all these things at once, 'tis evident he cannot but of Necessity always know, without possibility of Error, *what* is the *Best and Properest End* to be brought about, in each one of the possible infinite cases or methods of disposing things; and *which* are the fittest *Means* to that End; and *how* those Means may best be *ordered and directed*, to accomplish it accordingly: And, having no wrong Inclination possibly to change his Will, any more than opposition possibly to withstand his Power; 'tis plain he will always actually effect, what in right and reason is fittest to be done. Now This, is infinite or perfect Wisdom; To know always the *Best End*; to see always the *Means* that will produce that End; to understand exactly *how to apply* those means to the accomplishing that End; and to have always

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ways a right and invariable *Inclination or Will*, to act accordingly. SERM.
XII.

AGAIN; every Unwise Action, or circumstance of action, must necessarily proceed, either from shortness of Understanding, or from Defect of Power, or from Faultiness of Will; Either that the Agent *knows* not, or that he *can* not, or that he *will* not do what is best. But now from each of these Defects, the Perfection of the divine Nature is infinitely removed. Therefore every Action of God, must of Necessity, (meaning in the moral sense of the word *Necessity*,) be what is *absolutely* and *in itself* and *upon the whole* most Wise.

FROM *some* or *other* of these Defects, in *some* Degree, or in *some* Circumstances, no *Other* Being can be exempt. *No other Being* therefore, is perfectly Wise: But the Perfection, as *in* God it is complete and absolute, so *to* him Alone it is confined: The Apostle frequently styling him, with the greatest Justice and Truth, *God Only Wise*. Yet *Vain man* would be *Wise*; *Wise without*, and *Wise in opposition to*, his Maker: Profanely sometimes, and Atheistically Wise; *though man be born like*

SERM. *like a wild asses colt*, Job xi. 12. that is,

XII. tho' being short-lived as the Beasts that
 ~~~~~ perish, he could neither *give* himself Being, nor *continue* it to himself when he had it; neither knows what things have been before him, not what shall be after him, nor the millionth part of the things that are present with him. Philosophers, when beyond an humble Admiration of the Works of God, and a sober inquiry into the nature and operations of second causes under the direction of the first, they indulge themselves in feigning Schemes out of their own Imagination, and attempt in *explaining Nature* to exclude the God of *Nature*; *professing themselves Wise, they become Fools*, Rom. i. 22. and under the Notion of Science, vent the most ridiculous extravagancies. Politicians, Tyrants, the great Oppressors and Destroyers of the Earth, lay what they call Wise and long fore-casted Designs. But yet, as *Elibu* well observes, *Job xxxii.*  
 9. *Great men are not always Wise*: For God often turneth their Wisdom backward, and maketh their Counsel Foolishness; blasting their deepest projects with the Breath of his Mouth, and dispersing them

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as a Spider's web; by Storms and Tem-  
pests, by Fire and Earthquakes, by Dis-  
eases and Death, by potent Enemies or

S E R M.

XII.



treacherous Friends, and innumerable o-  
ther unforeseen or unavoidable Accidents.

But what need we mention these greater  
and more enormous Follies? The true

Wisdom even of the *best* and most *rea-*  
*sonable* men, is mixt with perpetual Weak-

ness; and our wise Actions bear no pro-  
portion to our Infirmities. Nay, even

Angels themselves, those great and glori-  
ous Spirits, who always behold the Face

of God, and surround the Throne of in-  
finite Wisdom; yet even of these it is

elegantly affirmed in the Book of *Job*,  
*ch. iv. 18.* that *he puts no trust in his Ser-*

*vants, and his Angels he chargeth with*

*Folly: With Folly; Not like the Follies*

*of Vain Men; But with such Imperfecti-*  
*ons, as are comparatively Folly, in the Eyes*

*of Him who alone is Wisdom and Per-*  
*fection itself.*

HAVING thus briefly shown in general,  
that God *must* of Necessity be infinitely

Wise, and that *He Only* is so; I proceed  
Now in the

IId

SERM.  
XII.

Ild place, To consider more distinctly and in particular, the different *Manifestations* of this divine Wisdom, in his *Works*, in his *Government*, and in his *Laws*. The Wisdom of God in his *Works*, is the Demonstration of his *Being*; The Wisdom of God in his *Government*, is the great Confirmation of the Truth of his *Providence* with regard to Men; and the Wisdom of God in his *Laws*, is the Excellency and recommendation of *Religion*.

1<sup>st</sup>, IF we consider the *Works* of God, and view this stately Fabrick which his hands have made; we still find, that from the brightest Star in the firmament of Heaven, to the meanest Pebble upon the face of the Earth, there is no part of Matter, great or small, wherein the Wisdom of the Creator does not *more* clearly and undeniably appear, than the Skill of an Architect is manifested by a Building, or the Judgment of an Artificer by the completeness of his Work. In almost every part of the Creation, the *Variety* of *Things themselves* is *greater*; and the *different* Uses which *every single thing* is with the utmost exquisiteness fitted to serve at once, are *more in Number*; than the  
Wiseſt



Wiseſt and Greateſt Philoſophers, aſſiſted S E R M.  
by the perpetually growing discoveries of XII.  
increasing ages, are ever able to exhaust  
or enumerate. So that present and future  
Times, after employing the Sagacity of  
all Generations, shall still with the same  
Truth as at first, repeat the words of *Job*;  
who, having at large described the Great-  
ness of the Works of God in Heaven and  
in Earth, concludes *ch. xxvi. 14.* *Lo, these*  
*are part of his ways; but how little a por-*  
*tion is heard of him!* Or, as *Salomon* ex-  
presses it, *Eccles. xi. 5.* *As thou knowest not*  
*what is the way of the Spirit; (Of the*  
*Wind, it should be translated; according*  
*to that of our Saviour, Thou bearest the*  
*Sound thereof, but knowest not whence it*  
*cometh, nor whither it goeth;)* *As thou*  
*knowest not what is the way of the Spirit,*  
*nor how the bones do grow in the womb of*  
*her that is with child; even so thou know-*  
*est not the works of God who maketh all.*  
Or, as the wise Author of the book of  
*Ecclesiasticus*; who, having given a noble  
description of all the parts of the visible  
Creation known in *his* time, sums up all  
at last with this judicious exclamation,  
*ch. xliiii. 32.* *There are still hid greater*  
*things*

S E R M. *things than these, and we have seen but a*  
 XII. *few of his Works.* Nevertheless, while, to  
 the largest Understandings, the Number  
 of Things, and the Variety of the Uses  
 to which each of them is fitted, are more  
 than can in particular be possibly compre-  
 hended; 'tis yet at the same time, even to  
 meanest capacities, made most obviously  
 apparent in general, through the whole  
 frame of Nature, that every thing is with  
 consummate Wisdom adapted to the best  
 and noblest Uses. *The invisible things of*  
*God from the Creation of the World are*  
*clearly seen, being understood by the things*  
*that are made.* The Heavenly Bodies, by  
 their being fitly placed to communicate  
 to us in a due proportion their Heat and  
 Light and other Influences, by never-fail-  
 ing Vicissitudes of Day and Night, Win-  
 ter and Summer, Seed-time and Harvest,  
 declare, even to the most vulgar Under-  
 standings, *the Glory of God; and the fir-*  
*mament sheweth his handy work,* Ps. xix. 1.  
 For, had these Bodies been of any other  
 Bigness, at any other Distance, or in any  
 other Motion than they Now are; (which  
 shows their present constitution to be the  
 effect of perfect Wisdom;) the world  
 could

## Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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could by no means have subsisted. By <sup>SERM.</sup> the *Sun's* being bigger or nearer than it <sup>XII.</sup> is, we had necessarily been consumed with Heat; By its being either smaller or farther off, we had as unavoidably been destroyed with Cold; By any inequality in its Motion, a Succession of *Both* extremes, Heat and Cold after each other, would have brought upon us the same destruction, as a Perpetuity of *Either*. The *Earth* whereon we dwell, being so beautifully adorned with Plants and Animals, so bountifully furnished with Seas and Rivers, Air and Winds, Clouds and Rain, Metals and Minerals, for Use, for Ornament, for Delight; gives daily demonstration, even to persons of the lowest capacity, if not perverted and stupified thro' Vice and Debauchery; that *the Lord* by Wisdom founded the *Earth*, that by Understanding he established the *Heavens*; that by his Knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down dew, Prov. iii. 19: Or, as the Prophet expresses it, Jer. li. 15. that he made the *Earth* by his Power, established the *World* by his Wisdom, and stretched out the *Heaven* by his Understanding. Had any of these things

S E R M. things been disposed in any *other* manner  
 XII. or proportion than they are, the Earth  
 had been no place of Habitation: With  
 more *Waters*, the whole had been made  
 unserviceable by moisture; with *less*, it  
 had been destroyed thro' drought. The  
 Air, with the violence of *stronger Winds*,  
 would have overturned all things; and  
 without *Any*, it would have putrified by  
 stagnation. Nay, even those *inconvenient*  
 things, as they may seem at first sight;  
 by removing of which, some profane Phi-  
 losophers of old pretended that they could  
 have mended the structure of the World;  
 even *these very things* themselves, which  
 have been brought as objections against  
 the Wisdom of the Creator, are found  
 upon a closer view to be by no means use-  
 less or unnecessary. *Wide Seas* are neces-  
 sary for the producing of Rain; *Moun-  
 tains and barren lands* for preserving the  
 Air healthful; and *Storms and Tempests*  
 for purifying it when corrupt; and other  
 particular things still *more noxious*, if they  
 have not likewise their more secret Uses,  
 yet at least they are proper Instruments  
 in the hand of Providence for correcting  
 and awakening a careless and irreligious  
 World.



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IF now from the World itself, we turn S E R M.  
XII.  
our eyes more particularly upon *Man*, the principal visible Inhabitant whom God has placed therein, and the numberless *other Creatures* wherewith he hath replenished it; no understanding can be so low and mean, no Heart so stupid and insensible, (unless infatuated with the absurd prejudices and witchcraft of Atheism,) as not to see plainly, that nothing but infinite and perfect Wisdom, could have produced that *infinite Variety of Living Creatures*, so *like*, and at the same time so *unlike* to each other, that in That boundless Diversity, the innumerable particulars wherein each creature differs from all others, should yet every one of them have its proper Beauty, and its peculiar, adequate, and singular Use. And over all These, is placed *Man*, the Lord of all, made in the Image of God; made capable *Himself* of adoring his great Creator, and of turning *all other things* likewise to his Praise. The *inanimate* part of the World, being void of *Sense*; the *animate* part, being void of *Reason*; cannot praise God any otherwise, than through the Mouth of *Man*: Without *Him*, the Heavens  
could

S E R M. could not declare the Glory of God, nor

XII. the Earth shew forth his handy-work.

But *by and through Man, all things extol* their Maker; and, by affording materials for *Our Songs of Praise, they themselves* may justly be said, not only without any impropriety of speech, but on the contrary indeed by a most elegant and lively Figure, as it is exemplified in the *Song of the Three Children; they themselves*, even the *inanimate* creatures, even all the *works of the Lord*, may themselves be said to praise him, to *praise him and magnify him for ever*. In the *Body of Man*, the Wisdom of God has manifested itself in so putting together an inconceivable number of different minute parts, as that none of them could be spared or otherwise placed, but to the great damage, if not destruction, of the whole. O Lord, *I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and That my Soul knoweth right well. My Bones are not hid from thee, though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the Earth. Thine eyes did see my Substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy Book were all my Members written;*  
Which

*Which day by day were fashioned, when as* S E R M.  
*yet there was none of them, Ps. cxxxix. 13.* XII.

But still *more* than in all these, more admirably and in a more exalted manner, appears the Divine Wisdom in the creation of the *Soul* of Man, a Substance endued with those wonderful Faculties, of *Thinking, Understanding, Judging, Reasoning, Chusing, Acting*, and, which is the End and Excellency of all, *Religion*; the Power of knowing, obeying, imitating, and praising its Creator; Which yet neither It, nor still superior Beings, Angels and Archangels, or the whole Host of Heaven, can worthily or sufficiently do; for, *who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his Praise?* Ps. cvi. 2.

THE *more* all these works of God are studied, and the more diligently they are inquired and searched into, the more and the clearer Marks of Wisdom continually appear in them. And perhaps this very thing itself, is none of the smallest instances of the divine Wisdom in the contrivance of the whole; that whereas in the language of Scripture, and to the common sense and obvious judgment of

S E R M. pious persons of the *meanest* capacities a-  
 XII. mong the Vulgar, God himself appears  
 to be the immediate Author of all the  
 operations of Nature; but by those who  
 have gained some small conceited Know-  
 ledge in Philosophy, these things are ge-  
 nerally so ascribed to the efficiency of se-  
 cond Causes, that God is represented ei-  
 ther as not interposing at all, or so re-  
 motely as hardly to be taken notice of; it  
 has again by those, who have made the  
*greatest* and truest improvements in na-  
 tural Knowledge, been discovered and  
 clearly proved, that all second Causes,  
 (excepting Men and Angels, which are  
 free Agents,) all *other* second Causes, (as  
 they are usually stiled,) are really no Cau-  
 ses, and have no efficiency at all, but are  
*mere Instruments* by which God perpe-  
 tually acts, and is Himself the constant  
 (if not Only) Agent in what we vulgarly  
 call the *Course of Nature*. So that the  
 best and perfectest Philosophy, has ended  
 where the natural Sense of Mankind be-  
 gan; strongly confirming and rescuing  
 That Truth out of the hands of half-  
 learn'd vain Scepticks, which was origi-  
 nally the universal Voice of Nature, and  
 the



## Of the Wisdom of GOD.

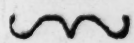
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the first and most obvious Manifestation S E R M.  
of God. And the Wisdom of the great XII.  
Creator has in *This*, as in all other mat-  
ters, illustriously appeared; that in order  
to our *true Knowledge of God*, wherein All  
men both learned and ignorant are equal-  
ly concerned, all *other* sorts of Learning  
and Knowledge, (tho' very useful and va-  
luable,) yet are so far from being abso-  
lutely *necessary*, that, provided there be  
not wanting an honest and sincere inten-  
tion, it will at least, with regard to all  
these *other* things, be found true in pro-  
portion, that *he who gathered much, had  
nothing over, and he who gathered little,  
had no lack.*

AND thus much concerning the Wis-  
dom of God, as made known by his  
*Works.*

2. I AM in the next place to consider,  
the Manifestations of the same divine  
Wisdom in his *Government* of the World.  
By which I do not now understand *That  
Providence* by which he preserves and go-  
verns the *natural World*; For This was  
included under the former Head; But by  
his *Government of the World*, I would  
here be understood to mean, his *Govern-*

SERM. *ment of rational Creatures, of Angels and*  
 XII. *of Men.* Now concerning the Wisdom  
 of Providence in *This Government*, 'tis  
 not reasonable to make any positive judgment, from only a partial Knowledge of a few of its proceedings in some small portions of Time. For, not of the Government of a *Kingdom* or a *Family*, much less of the Government of the *Universe*, can any one make a right and true judgment, without seeing the Issue and Design of the *Whole*. Yet even in all the *single* parts of the divine Oeconomy, if we consider the History of Providence, we shall find sufficient marks of Wisdom, to convince and satisfy us, that the Disposition of the whole, will in the end appear as much wiser than can now be conceived; as the Structure of the natural World, after the Discoveries of many Ages, has been found greater and nobler, than the mean conjectures and narrow Notions of the Antient Philosophers apprehended. *Angels*, having been at first created in so perfect a state, that nothing less than a total and incorrigible corruption, could make them chuse to *leave their own Habitation*, *Jude vi.* it was therefore fit that no place  
 should

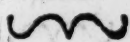


should be left for their Return, but that they should be *reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* The State of *Man in Innocence*, was in great Wisdom furnished abundantly with all things necessary, to the Happiness of such a Creature in such a State: Yet, that his Obedience should be tried by God's reserving *one* homage to himself, in acknowledgment of his being Author and Lord of all, cannot but be confessed to be more becoming a Wise and Supreme Governour, than if he had appointed no such trial, nor required any instance of Obedience at all. For This seems to be the meaning of the forbidden Tree; possibly not that in its own nature, it was better or worse than the other Fruits of the Earth; but that God reserved it, as an instance of homage to himself: And the curiosity of trying what was forbidden, and curiosity of knowing good and evil, became to our first Parents a Temptation to Sin. By complying with which Temptation, when Man had actually sinned; he who before was immortal, justly became subject to Death. Not that his Body was, *before the Fall, naturally Im-*  
*mortal;*

S E R M. *mortal*; (which can hardly be conceived;) XII. but that God, either by translating him, or by glorifying him, or by *any other* means unknown to us, (but in general aptly figured by the *Tree of Life*;) would have preserved him from Death, which by Sin only was to come actually upon him. Nevertheless even from That Mortality, which he brought upon himself by Sin, God still left him a Hope of restitution; because in his nature he was more frail and fallible than Angels, and fell not like them through incorrigible malice, but with a mixture of Weakness. The Light of *Nature*, and the Tradition of God's revealing himself in Paradise, were sufficient Guides to the Posterity of Adam in the first Ages. In opposition to which Light when men had by degrees corrupted themselves more and more, even to an universal Defection; the Wisdom of God manifested itself in destroying that generation by a Flood, for an Example to all future Ages; and yet not destroying them so utterly, but that a few Witnesses were left, for a better Testimony to those that should come after, than if a total Destruction had made necessary a new Creation.

After





After This, the Wisdom of God shewed forth itself in inflicting proper particular judgments for particular crying Sins; destroying the inhabitants of *Sodom*, for their unnatural Lusts, by Fire from Heaven; punishing the *Jews*, as often as they fell into Idolatry, with *that recompense of their error which was meet*, by suffering them to be carried captive into Idolatrous Nations, and dispersed in so unexampled a manner; as to remain a standing instance of Providence in the sight of all Nations even at This day; and frequently requiting also *particular* eminent persons in History, such as *Agag*, *Adonibezek*, and the like, with the same measure that they had meted unto Others: Yet at the same time more generally *forbearing* wicked persons, that they might have space for *Repentance*; and on the contrary, frequently *disciplining* the good, chastising whom he loved, and weaning them from the World. So that even those very proceedings of Providence, which were vulgarly looked upon as the chief objections against it, his afflicting the good and sparing the evil, appeared, when rightly considered, to be on the contrary

S E R M. none of the smallest instances of its Wis-  
 XII. dom.

UPON the whole; the Patriarchs and the *Jews* were a standing Theocracy, and perpetual Testimony against Idolatry; as a *Light* of true Religion, *upon a Hill*, held forth unto all Nations. And the Wisdom of that *Jewish* institution appeared particularly in This, that by a number of rites in the worship of the *true* God, they were preserved from running after false Gods served by their neighbouring nations; and those rites were at the same time, both emblems of moral Purity, and Types of Christ: By whose coming at last in the fulness of Time, the Wisdom of God most of all conspicuously manifested itself, in bringing Life and Immortality to Light, and discovering plainly how all the various Scenes and Dispensations of Providence through the course of all Ages in this World, should at the final Judgment terminate in a just retribution of reward and punishment to every single person according to his desert. But this belongs more properly to the next Head, *viz.* the manifestation of the Wisdom of God in his *Law*.

S E R M O N



# SERMON XIII.

## *Of the WISDOM of GOD.*

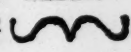


COL. ii. 3.

*In whom are hid all the Treasures  
of Wisdom.*



IN a former Discourse upon SERMON.  
these Words I have shown, XIII.

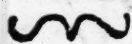
1<sup>st</sup> in general, That God *must*   
of Necessity be infinitely  
Wise; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, I proposed

to consider, more distinctly and in particular, the different *Manifestations* of this divine Wisdom, in the *Works* of God, in his *Government*, and in his *Laws*. The Two former of these considerations, *viz.* the *Works* of God, and his *Government* of the World by Providence, I have already gone through: The

3<sup>d</sup> and

SERM.

XIII.



3<sup>d</sup> and last, WHICH is the Manifestation of the Wisdom of God in his *Laws*, will be the Subject of the present Discourse. Now the *primary* and *original* Law of God, is the *Law of Nature*; That eternal and unchangeable Law of Morality, which necessarily arises from the *Nature* of Creatures, and from their *Relation* to God and to each other. And the Wisdom of *This* Law, is the very same as the Wisdom of God's Creation itself; being nothing else, than the universal Benefit and Happiness of all reasonable Creatures, arising from their acting according to that *Nature* which God has given them, and according to the respective *Relations* wherein they are placed thereby.

THE next Law of God given to Men, was the *Mosaick* Institution; (For the several Appearances of God to the *Patriarchs*, were but so many revealed confirmations of the Law of Nature :) And the *Wisdom* of *That* Institution given to the *Jews* by *Moses*, appeared by its being fitted, by a number of Rites and Ceremonies used in the Service of the *True* God, to preserve them from the numerous Temptations of that idolatrous worship paid to

False



False Gods, wherewith all the Nations S E R M.  
 were overspread around them. Which XIII.  
 Rites were also at the same time, both apt   
 Emblems of moral Purity, and Types of  
 what was after to be accomplished by  
 Christ. Upon which account, St Paul  
 elegantly describes the Use of *the Law*,  
 that *it was their Schoolmaster to bring*  
*them unto Christ, that they might be justi-*  
*fied by Faith*, Gal. iii. 24. *by Faith*, that  
 is, not by bare *Belief* in opposition to *O-*  
*bedience*, but by the obedience of that  
 Christian *Religion* which was by way of  
 eminence called by the name of *Faith*, as  
 the Jewish *Religion* had been stiled *the*  
*Law*. But These things I do but just  
 mention, as preparatory to what follows.

THE *Last* and *Great* Manifestation of  
 the Wisdom of God in his *Laws*, is *the*  
*Gospel itself*; that plenary and final Reve-  
 lation of the Will of God by Christ, up-  
 on account of which, Christ is stiled *the*  
*Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24: And the  
 words of the Text itself, tho' they be in-  
 deed of such ambiguous construction, that  
 they may possibly enough be understood  
 of *the Wisdom of God the Father*, as one  
 of the divine Attributes, in general; or of  
*the*

SER M. *the Wisdom of Christ, in general, as being*  
 XIII. *that divine Person in whom dwelt the ful-*  
 ness of the Godhead bodily; yet, consider-  
 ing the occasion and manner upon which  
 they are introduced, it seems to be their  
 most natural meaning and intent to af-  
 firm, with regard only to *the Gos-*  
*pel in particular, that in Christ are*  
*hid all the Treasures of Wisdom.* For the  
 Apostle having in the foregoing verse,  
 been speaking concerning *the acknowledg-*  
*ment of the Mystery, of God the Father*  
*and of Christ;* by which mystery he plain-  
 ly means the Gospel; must reasonably be  
 understood, when he adds immediately  
 these next words, *all the Treasures of Wis-*  
*dom,* to intend still to express thereby the  
 same mystery. The Gospel therefore is  
 here stiled by the Apostle, Col. ii. 3. *all*  
*the Treasures of Wisdom;* that is, all the  
 treasures of *That* Wisdom, which God  
 intended to make known to the World by  
 Christ. And because it is *That* particular  
 instance of the divine Wisdom, *in which,*  
 of all others, we are *most* concerned; 'tis  
 therefore fit we should more distinctly in-  
 large upon it. Now in order to set forth  
 more clearly, the Wisdom of God in this  
 Dispensation;

*Of the Wisdom of G O D.*

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Dispensation ; 'tis necessary to observe in S E R M.  
XIII.  
the first place, that *Wisdom* consists principally in two things ; in choosing to pursue the most excellent *Ends* ; and in accomplishing those *Ends* by the best and fittest, tho' oftentimes the most unlikely, *means*. Now the *Ends* of the Gospel are, in the first place That great and *universal* Design, which both *This* and in general all Other actions of God, do ultimately tend to and terminate in ; viz. the establishing *universal Righteousness* and *Happiness* through the whole World, which is the Kingdom of God. But then more particularly, and in order to That general *Design*, the principal *Ends* of *This Dispensation* in particular, are : 1<sup>st</sup> To vindicate the Justice of God, and the Honour of his Laws and Government ; and to show his irreconcilable Hatred against Sin : 2<sup>dly</sup>, To manifest at the same time, and in a consistent manner, his Mercy and Compassion towards Sinners : 3<sup>dly</sup>, To show the absolute Necessity of Repentance to Sinners, and of their effectual Amendment and Reformation ; and the Impossibility of Pardon without it : and 4<sup>thly</sup>, To give to Them who are  
in

S E R M. in This manner truly Penitent, an assured  
 XIII. Hope, that they shall be Objects of the  
 Divine Mercy so illustriously manifested  
 in the Gospel ; and to instruct and assist  
 them in their Duty accordingly. These  
 are *Ends*, well becoming the Wisdom of  
 the Supreme Governour of the World, to  
 intend and prosecute. And in the *accom-*  
*plishing* these Ends through *the Gospel*,  
 by *Means* in reality so excellently fitted to  
 their respective Ends ; and yet some of  
 them so *unexpected*, and others to humane  
 Judgment so *improbable of Success* ; has  
 the divine *Wisdom* more illustriously ap-  
 peared, than in any other dispensation of  
 Providence known to us. In the

1<sup>st</sup> place ; the *first* End or Design of  
 the Gospel, is to vindicate the *Justice* of  
 God, and the *Honour* of his Laws and Go-  
 vernment ; and to show his irreconcila-  
 ble *Hatred against Sin*. When Man had  
 presumptuously sinned, by transgressing a  
 plain Command of his Supreme Gover-  
 nor ; 'tis manifest God could not but be  
 displeased at so unreasonable an Action,  
 and his Justice would necessarily call for  
 Punishment : Necessarily ; Not perhaps  
 by any absolute necessity of *Nature* ; as if  
 God



## Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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SERM.  
XIII.

God by his supreme dominion and authority *could not* have forgiven Offenses committed against himself, freely and without any Satisfaction, if he had so pleased: For every Prince *upon Earth*, every *Superiour* whatsoever, every *private* offended person, *has That* Power, if he *thinks fit* to exercise it; Nay, in some cases, we are *commanded* to forgive offenses, without requiring any Satisfaction at all: But the meaning is, when we say the *Justice* of God *necessarily* called for Punishment, that it was very *Fit*, very *right*, very *reasonable*, and in the Wisdom of Government, really *necessary*; that the pernicious and destructive Nature of Sin, should be made apparent; that *His* indignation against it, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, should be fully manifested; and that the Honour and Dignity of the eternal Laws of his righteous Government should be supported and vindicated, the Greatness and Weight of his Commands preserved, and the necessity of Holiness and true Virtue evidenced. Now *This End*, the Wisdom of God accomplished even *more effectually*, by the Death of his Son; than it would have been

S E R M. been even by the Destruction of the Of-  
 XIII. fender himself. For since God *would* not  
 pass over the Sins of Men, without so  
 great a person's suffering in the Nature of  
 Man; that is, since he *did not* think any  
*other* method so *proper* of declaring his  
 mercy and compassion towards Sinners, as  
 that of so singular and extraordinary a  
 Dispensation; This shows, in the strong-  
 est and most affecting manner, the great-  
 ness of his Indignation against Sin, and  
 his real Concern to preserve the Laws of  
 everlasting Righteousness from being de-  
 spised or lightly transgressed. Rather than  
 This should not be effectually taken care  
 of, he permitted *his own Son* to become a  
 Sacrifice for Sin: He *permitted* him, I  
 say; (For one person cannot *justly* be ap-  
 pointed to suffer for another, but by his  
*own consent* :) He *permitted*, that *his own*  
*Son* should, *for Sin, condemn Sin in the*  
*flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. that is, should him-  
 self by suffering in the Flesh as a Sacrifice  
 for Sin, become the great and standing  
 condemnation of Sin for ever; should be-  
 come an everlasting example and demon-  
 stration, how necessary the Wisdom of  
 God thought it in the government of the  
 World,

World, that Sin should be severely and S E R M.  
exemplarily condemned. And This is the XIII.  
plain meaning of all those phrases of  
Scripture, wherein the Death of Christ is  
represented as our *redemption, ransom, or*  
*purchase*; or his *buying us with a price*, and  
the like. His making *satisfaction* for us;  
was not by way of exact *equivalent*, which  
God was *bound* to accept; as in the case  
of one man's paying a debt for another:  
For in That case, no Acknowledgments  
are due to *him*, to whom the debt is paid;  
but to *him* only, who pays it; Neither  
could it with Truth have been affirmed,  
(as the Scripture always takes care to af-  
firm with great earnestness,) that God  
forgives mens Sins freely *and out of mere*  
*grace and mercy*, if *Satisfaction* were  
made for them in *That* sense: But the  
plain meaning of Christ's making *Satis-*  
*saction* for us, is, that God was pleased  
freely to appoint, and freely to accept,  
and, of his mere grace and mercy, to be  
*satisfied with* what Christ did and suf-  
fered, in vindication of the divine Jus-  
tice, and of the Honour of God's Laws  
and Government, and for the manifesting  
his irreconcilable Hatred against Sin.

SERM.  
XIII.

2dly, THE *second* End or Design of the Gospel, is to manifest at the same time, and in a consistent manner, God's *Mercy and Compassion* towards Sinners. *Mercy*, is an Attribute as essential to the divine Nature, as Justice; and *its* proper Office, is to show forth itself in all truly compassionate cases. Man, tho' an actual Sinner by the corrupt Choice indeed of his *Will*, yet in his very *Nature* was frail and fallible, and liable to be deceived. His case therefore, was, upon That consideration, a proper object of compassion: For God *knew whereof we were made, and remembered that we were but dust*, Ps. ciii. 14. That which in This case became infinite Wisdom to do, was to extend mercy and compassion unto sinful Man; and yet to do This in such a manner, as might at the same time be perfectly consistent with his unalterable Justice and Indignation against Sin. Now *This End* would not have been so completely answered, by God's making use of his absolute Sovereignty and Supreme Authority *alone*, in the forgiveness of Sin. But it was perfectly answered by the All-wise dispensation of the Gospel, when

God



## Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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God manifested his *Love* to the *World* by S E R M.  
*sending his only-begotten Son*, that in him XIII.

*we might have redemption thro' his blood,*  
*even the forgiveness of Sins, according to*  
*the riches of his grace, wherein he has a-*  
*bounded towards us in all Wisdom and*  
*Prudence, Eph. i. 7, 8.* These last words,  
*in all Wisdom and Prudence*, seem design-  
edly added by the Apostle, to express the  
wonderful Fitness of the Gospel, fully to  
answer the End I am now speaking of.  
For nothing could possibly be a greater  
Instance and Assurance, of God's Love  
and Compassion towards Men, than This  
sending of his own Son for their Redemp-  
tion; *He that spared not his own Son, but*  
*delivered him up for us all; how shall he*  
*not with Him also freely give us all things?*  
Rom. viii. 32. And yet at the same time,  
in this dispensation, the heinousness of  
Sin, and God's irreconcilable Anger a-  
gainst it, is set forth in the *strongest* man-  
ner; in the very circumstances of Mercy  
itself, even while he is pardoning and ac-  
cepting of Sinners. So that we may just-  
ly say with the Psalmist; *Mercy and*  
*Truth*, (that is, *Mercy and Justice*) *are*  
*here met together; Righteousness and*

SERM.  
XIII.

*Peace, (that is, Justice and Forgiveness) have kissed each other.* The only considerable Difficulty in this matter, is to conceive how so great a Person as the *Son of God*, should condescend so far, in taking care of such mean persons as the *Sons of Men*. But This difficulty arises only from our Narrowness of Thought. For if 'tis not beneath the incomprehensible Majesty of *God himself*, to inspect, direct, and over-rule the Motions of every even the smallest particle of inanimate Matter in the Universe; as his Providence in the course of Nature demonstrates that it is not; (since not only not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, but even the very Hairs of our head, as our Saviour assures us, are all numbred by him:) I say, If 'tis not beneath, much less is it any Disparagement to the Dignity of the *Son of God*, (though a very wonderful *condescension* indeed *it is*,) to redeem the immortal Souls of Men.

3dly, THE *third* End of the Gospel, is to show the absolute Necessity of *Repentance* to Sinners, and of their effectual Amendment and Reformation; and the Impossibility of Pardon without it. That

mere

men cannot otherwise become happy, then S E R M.  
XIII.  
by the Practise of Virtue; and that Sin-  
ners cannot become capable of Pardon,  
but by forsaking their Sins; is evident  
both from what we know by Reason,  
concerning the nature of God, of Men,  
and of Things; and from all former Re-  
velations of the divine Will. But by the  
Gospel, the Wisdom of God has in a more  
illustrious manner, and with greater  
Weight of Arguments, set forth the indis-  
pensable necessity of Repentance and A-  
mendment, and the impossibility of obtain-  
ing Pardon without it; when even with it,  
he did not think fit to manifest his mercy  
to Sinners directly, but thro' the Intercession  
of Christ, and by the merits of his Death;  
Appointing that the Manner of accepting  
even Repentance itself, should be through  
the Mediation of his beloved Son, by  
men's being baptized into his Death, and  
washing their robes in the blood of the  
Lamb: In This very Dispensation of  
mercy, revealing more expressly his wrath  
from Heaven against all ungodliness and  
unrighteousness of Men; and commanding  
us in the strictest manner, to walk worthy  
of so great a vocation, behaving ourselves

SERM. exemplarily, as children of the Day and  
XIII. of Light, in all Holiness and godly conversation : For that, whereas God winked

*at the former times of ignorance, he now peremptorily commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, (Acts xvii. 30.) and if judgment must begin at the house of God, what will the End be of them that obey not the Gospel ? This is the strongest reproof in the World, to all the vain Contrivances, by which wicked men deceive themselves; by Pilgrimages and Abstinences, by Purifications and Oblations, by the Merits of Saints, by Death-bed Sacraments, by the Absolutions of the Priest, or Any other means of reconciliation whatsoever, besides that One of cleansing themselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*

4thly, THE fourth and last End or Design of the Gospel, is to give to such as are truly Penitent a full Assurance of Hope, that they shall be Objects of the divine Mercy; and to instruct and assist them in their duty accordingly. And This End, the Gospel has answered in the

wisdom



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wisest and most perfect manner. For S E R M.  
tho' there *was* indeed, even under the XIII.  
Light of *Nature*, very good ground of  
*Hope*, that God *would* accept the Repen-  
tance of Sinners; yet 'tis a strong *additio-*  
*nal* assurance, which the divine Wisdom  
has now vouchsafed us, in *not sparing his*  
*own Son*, but *delivering him up for us all*.  
This is *indeed* an *effectual* encouragement  
to all sincere Penitents, to All who have  
*really* forsaken every vicious course; to  
*draw near* and apply themselves to the Heb. x. 22.  
Throne of grace *with a true heart*, in  
*full assurance of Faith*; having *boldness and*  
*access with confidence*, to enter into the Rom. v. 1,  
*Holiest by the blood of Jesus*, by a new and Eph. iii.  
*living way which he has consecrated for us*. 12.  
And the more; because he has *not only*  
opened unto us the Temple in Heaven by  
his Blood, but *continues constantly to make* Heb. vii.  
*intercession for us*, to be our *Advocate with* 25.  
*the Father*, and a perpetual *High-Priest* 1 Joh. ii. 1.  
for us *over the house of God*: And, that  
we might live worthy of these great pri-  
vileges, hath himself *left us an example* 1 Pet. ii. 21.  
of all Holiness and Purity, *that we should*  
*follow his Steps*: And, that we might not  
want *Motives* to engage us to imitate him,

S E R M. has made to us a clear and distinct Disco-

XIII. very of a Judgment to come. And, be-  
 cause it was Wise and Fit, that That do-  
 ctrine which was to be an *universal* Law  
 and Rule of Life, which was to be the  
 condition of Salvation to persons of *all*  
 capacities, should be very easy and intel-  
 ligible to *All*; therefore he has delivered  
 it to us with all Plainness and Simplicity,  
 not in the abstruse words of *Man's Wis-*  
*dom*, (not in Terms hard to be understood,  
 such as are Those wherewith Later Ages  
 have corrupted his Doctrine;) *but in de-*  
*monstration of the Spirit and of Power,*  
 1 Cor. ii. 4. *Teaching us, that denying un-*  
*godliness and worldly lusts, we should live*  
*soberly righteously and godly in this present*  
*World*, in expectation of being judged ac-  
 cording to our works. And he is to be  
 himself our Judge; who, as St Paul ex-  
 presses it, *that he might be a merciful and*  
 Heb. ii. 17. *faithful High-Priest, has himself first suf-*  
 iv. 15. & v. *fered in all things like his brethren; and*  
 2. *can be touched with the feeling of our in-*  
*firmities, having himself been in all points*  
*tempted like as we are; and can have com-*  
*passion on the ignorant and on them that are*  
*out*

## Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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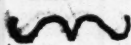
out of the way, for that he himself also SERMON  
had been compassed with infirmity. XIII.

THESE are some of the principal Ends and Designs of the Gospel. On account of the *Excellency* of which *Ends*, and the wonderful *Fitness* of the respective *Means*, made use of by the divine Wisdom in the manner I have now discours'd of, to accomplish them; Christ is called, (in 1 Cor. i. 24 and 30. the *Wisdom of God*; and in the *Text*, Col. ii. 3. it is expressed, that in Him *are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom*; and Eph. i. 8. that, by this dispensation, the *Grace of God* has *abounded towards us*, in all *Wisdom and Prudence*; and Phil. iii. 8. that *all other things* are to be *accounted as Loss*, for the *Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord*. This is the *first* mark of *Wisdom*; the *Excellency of the Ends proposed*, and the *Fitness of the respective Means* to accomplish them.

THE next Circumstance wherein the *Wisdom of God* has particularly shewn forth itself in the accomplishing of the fore-mentioned *Ends*, is; that the *Incar-nation of Christ*, as, *after* it was revealed, it appeared to be plainly in all respects  
the

SERM.

XIII.



the *fittest* possible Means; so, before it was revealed, it was on the contrary such an *unexpected* Method, and so *undiscoverable* by any *finite* Wisdom, as to be an inscrutable Mystery, not only to Men, (upon which account St Paul calls it in the words before the Text, *the Mystery of God, even the Father, and of Christ*; and in 1 Cor. ii. 7. *the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew*; and Col. i. 26. *the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his Saints*;) but it was moreover a mystery which even the *Angels* also desired to look into, 1 Pet. i. 12. and such an instance of Wisdom, Eph. iii. 9, 10. that thereby not only all Men may see, *what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ*; but even to the highest Angels also, *to the principalities and Powers in heavenly places, may be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*.

THE last circumstance I shall take notice of, wherein the Wisdom of God has  
remark-





remarkably manifested itself in the Gospel, is his causing it to prevail in the World by unlikely instruments, by the preaching of mean and unlearned persons, in opposition to all the human Power and Wisdom of the World. The *Jews*, fond of establishing their own righteousness, opposed with all their Might *the righteousness of God*, that is, That new doctrine, that new method of Religion and Righteousness, which God established in the Gospel. The *Gentiles*, conceited of *their own human Wisdom and Philosophy*, opposed with all their Learning and artfulness of dispute, the *divine Wisdom manifested in the same doctrine of Christ*. Against *Both* these Opposers at once, a few mean and unlearned Persons were wonderfully inabled to prevail. And the Wisdom of God in causing them so to do, in *destroying the Wisdom of the Wise, and bringing to nothing the understanding of the prudent*, is most elegantly described by St Paul, in 1 Cor. i. 21. *After that, in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a Sign, and the*

S E R M. *the Greeks seek after Wisdom; But we*  
 XIII. *preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a*  
 *stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolish-*  
*ness; but unto them which are called, both*  
*Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God*  
*and the Wisdom of God: For --- God hath*  
*chosen the foolish things of the World to*  
*confound the wise, and the weak things of*  
*the world to confound the things that are*  
*mighty; --- That no flesh should glory in*  
*his presence. And in the 11th to the Rom.*  
*ver. 30. he illustrates and strengthens the*  
*same Argument still further, by observing*  
*another and more particular instance of*  
*Wisdom, in God's so disposing this whole*  
*matter, as that the unbelief of the Jews*  
*at first, and the converting of the Gen-*  
*tiles, would finally terminate in the more*  
*illustrious Reducing of the Jews like-*  
*wise, and the Salvation of Both: For as ye,*  
*saith he, ye Gentiles, in times past have*  
*not believed God, yet now have obtained*  
*mercy through Their [the Jews] unbelief;*  
*Even so have These also [the Jews] now*  
*not believed, that through your [the Gen-*  
*tiles] mercy They also may obtain mercy.*  
*For God hath concluded them All in un-*  
*belief, that he might have mercy upon All:*

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O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! SERM.  
XIII.

III. The Uses we are to make of this Whole Discourse, concerning the Wisdom of God considered either in general, or as more particularly manifested in his Works, his Government, and in his Laws; are briefly such as follow. *That* from hence we confute the Folly of *Atheists*, by showing them that the *more* the Works of God are studied, the *more* marks of Wisdom are continually discovered in them. *That* we who are already convinced of this truth, be continually praising God for all his works of Wisdom; *who by his excellent Wisdom made the Heavens, for his mercy endureth for ever; and stretched out the Earth above the Waters*, Ps. cxxxvi. 5, &c. and particularly for his works seen in *ourselves*; whether with regard to our *bodies*, Ps. cxxxix. 14. *I will praise thee, for I am wonderfully made*; or with respect to the Faculties of our *Minds*, for his having taught us *more than the Beasts of the Earth, and made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven*, Job xxxv. 11. *That* tho' the Instances of Wisdom

we

S E R M. we can discover, are numberless; yet we  
 XIII. are not to wonder, if we cannot find out  
 ~~~~~ All the ways of infinite wisdom, nor comprehend All the secrets of Providence: For, canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Job xi. 7. This Excellent man Job himself, who once thought he could understand the ways of God, and argue with him, yet confessed afterwards, *ch. xlii. 5, 6.* I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but Now mine Eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes. That therefore it becomes Us to apply ourselves to our own plain Duty, and leave Secret things to the Lord our God; considering, whenever the Difficulties of Providence are greater than we can explain, that if the well-laid Designs of a Wise and potent Prince, cannot by the first Scene of Action possibly be discovered; much more may it be impossible for Us, from our very short view of a few events of Providence, to be able to explain

Deut.
xxix. 29.

Of the Wisdom of GOD.

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plain the Designs of the Supreme and All-wise Governour of the World; which yet in the End, (when we know the whole,) shall appear most evidently Wise and Excellent: *Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength: But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes, the things that are in secret, &c.* Eccclus iii. 21. For the same

SERM.

XIII.

W

Eccclus. ii.

102.

Nos cæci

magna;

cupidine

ducti, &c.

reason, we are, in all afflictions, chearfully to submit to him; considering that the Divine Wisdom knows infinitely better what is fit for us, than we can judge for ourselves; and is able to find out unexpected means of deliverance for us, when he pleases; and make all things work together for good to them that love and fear him. And in all Exigencies, where there appear no visible means of escape, yet we may depend on him without anxious sollicitude; considering, that He whose Providence attends even to the minutest things; who feeds the Fowls of the Air, and clothes the Lillies of the Field; without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, or a hair of our head perishes; will certainly much more take care of
Us:

SERM. Us: And that no counsel can take place,
 XIII. and no device can stand, how deeply or
 wisely soever it may seem to be laid to
 human Understanding, if it be not agree-
 able to his All-wise Will: For even
 the Foolishness of God, as St Paul expresses
 it, 1 Cor. i. 25. that is, those things which
 to Us seem the most improbable, and
 wherein God makes use of the most un-
 likely means and instruments; even This
 is wiser than men; and the weakness of
 God is stronger than men. Lastly, If God
 is infinitely and Only wise, let Us in
 Our proportion seek true Wisdom, by I-
 mitation of him, and by Obedience to his
 Commands. Prov. ii. 3, &c. *If thou cry
 after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for
 understanding; if thou seek her as Silver,
 and search for her as hid Treasure; Then
 shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,
 and find the knowledge of God: For the
 Lord giveth Wisdom, out of his mouth
 cometh Knowledge and Understanding: He
 layeth up sound Wisdom for the righteous;
 he is a buckler to them that walk upright-
 ly; He keepeth the Paths of judgment, and
 preserveth the way of his Saints; Then shalt
 thou understand righteousness and judgment
 and equity, yea every good path.*

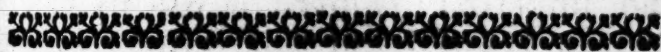
Jam. i. 5.
 Job xxviii.
 18.

SERMON



SERMON XIV.

Of the GOODNESS of GOD.



PSAL. cxlv. 9.

*The Lord is Good to All ; and his
tender Mercies are over all his
Works.*



HO' every one of the Divine S E R M.
Perfections in particular, af- XIV.
fords most just ground of A-
doration and Honour ; yet
That which to Us completes

the Idea of God, and represents him under
the Notion of the *Father* as well as *Lord*
of the Universe, and makes the Supreme
Being and Governour of all things, to be
no less the Object of our *Hope and Love*,
than of our *Admiration and Fear* ; is This
Vol. I. Y glorious

SERM. glorious Attribute, of Goodness. Eternity
 [XIV. and Immensity, amaze our Thoughts:
 ~~~~~ Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, fill us  
 with *Admiration*: Omnipotence or irre-  
 sistible Power is *great and adoreable*; but  
 at the same time, if considered singly by  
 itself, 'tis also *dreadful and terrible*: Do-  
 minion and Majesty clothed with perfect  
 and impartial *Justice*, is worthy of the  
*Highest Praises*; but still to *Sinners* it ap-  
 pears rather *awful and venerable*, than the  
 Object of Desire and Love: *Holiness and*  
*Purity*, are inexpressibly beautiful and a-  
 miable Perfections; but of too bright a  
 Glory, for *Sinners* to contemplate with  
 Delight. 'Tis *Goodness*, that *finishes* the  
 Idea of God; and represents him to us  
 under that *lovely Character*, of being the  
*Best*, as well as the *Greatest*, Being in the  
 Universe. *This* is That Attribute, which  
 both *in itself* is infinitely amiable; and, as  
 a ground-work interwoven with all the  
*Other Perfections* of the divine Nature,  
 makes every one of *Them* also to become  
 Objects of our *Love* as well as of our Ado-  
 ration. Immense and Eternal Goodness,  
 Goodness All-powerful and All-wise,  
 Goodness invested with Supreme Domini-  
 on,



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S E R M.  
XIV.

on, and tempering the rigour of unrelenting Justice; This is *indeed* a Description, of a *Perfect* Being; a Character, *truly* worthy of God. This is That inexhaustible Fountain of Beneficence, from which the *whole Frame of Nature* derives its Being; by which *all Creatures* in the Universe, are continually supported and preserved; from which *Man* derives his *present* enjoyments, and his *future* Hopes; which *Angels* and Archangels and the Spirits of just men made perfect, adore with never-ceasing Praises in the regions of eternal Happiness; and of which *our Saviour himself*, who, having been in the Bosom of his Father, knew infinitely better than All These, what was his True and Essential Nature: affirms by way of Eminence and High Distinction, that *there is None Good, but One, that is God*. The Psalmist describes this Attribute elegantly, in the words of the Text; *The Lord is Good to All, and his tender Mercies are over All his Works*.

IN the following Discourse upon which words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup>, endeavour to show briefly *in general*, What Goodness is: 2<sup>dly</sup>. I shall prove that *God is and cannot*

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Y 2

but

S E R M. *but be Good*, according to this general No-  
 XIV. tion of Goodness: 3dly, I shall endeavour  
 to set forth distinctly in *what particular*  
 Instances, the divine Goodness has more  
 peculiarly displayed itself: 4thly, I shall  
 consider the *Difficulties* or *Objections*  
 which may be raised against this impor-  
 tant doctrine, which is the Foundation  
 of true Religion, and the great Guard  
 against Superstition: And *Lastly* I shall  
 draw some useful *Inferences* from the  
 Whole.

IN the 1st place, 'tis necessary to show  
 briefly *in general*, What *Goodness* is. For  
 unless we clearly and distinctly understand,  
*what Goodness is*; 'tis evident we mean  
*nothing*, when we say *God is Good*; and  
 consequently cannot be certain whether  
 we *honour* him, or *dishonour* him, in gi-  
 ving him an unknown Character. No-  
 thing therefore can be more absurd, than  
 the doctrine which has sometimes been  
 advanced; that *Goodness* in *God*, is not  
 the same thing as Goodness in *Men*; but  
 something altogether transcendent, and  
 which we understand not. This, I say,  
 is highly absurd: Because, if This were  
 the case, it would plainly follow, that  
 when

when we affirm God to be *Good*, we should only affirm *we know not what*; that is, in reality we should affirm *nothing at all*. There is indeed *This* difference; that Goodness in *Men*, even in the *Best* of men, is *short and imperfect, frail and mutable, unsteady* and always *mixt* more or less with *Evil*; and even in *Angels* and *Arch-angels* themselves, 'tis *finite* and *deficient*; whereas in *God* alone, it is *essential* and *perfect*. But still the *Thing itself* is every where *the same*. Goodness is every where of the same *Nature*, tho' not in the same *proportion*; and in All Beings whatsoever, in whom it is found at all, it is the same in *Kind*, tho' not in *Degree*. If Goodness in *God*, were (as Some have imagined,) we know not what; how could we be commanded to *imitate*, what we do not understand? or how should any man know, whether he were likely to fare the *better* or the *worse*, by means of That which he knows not what it is? What *Comfort* can any man draw from the consideration of the Divine *Goodness*, if he means thereby only he knows not what; any thing that *Power*, any thing that *Dominion*, any thing that *Sovereignty* can

S E R M. do, whether it be Beneficent or not? The

XIV. True Notion therefore of the Goodness of God, must be learnt by considering what Goodness is in Men; And by adding, to the Idea of a good Man, boundless Perfection in the Degree of those Qualifications which denominate him such, we arrive at the nearest Conception, that 'tis possible for Us to frame, of the Divine Goodness. Thus our Saviour himself teaches us to argue; St. Matt. vii. 11. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him.* Now Goodness in Men, signifies a Benevolent Disposition; a Disposition to do good to others, even more extensively, and with greater Benignity, than is required by That Virtue which we call Justice or Righteousness. According to That accurate Distinction of the Apostle, Rom. v. 7. *For a righteous [or Just] man, scarcely will one die; yet peradventure for a Good man, some would even dare to die.* Righteousness or Justice, is doing all that good to Others, which They have any Claim of Right to demand; But Goodness is, further,



ther, doing them All That Good, which, S E R M.  
XIV.  
whether *They* have any Right to expect or  
not, is in any wise *fit*, or *reasonable*, for  
*Us* to bestow. Thus therefore the Good-  
ness of God, is That *Beneficent* Disposi-  
tion of the divine Nature, which moves  
him to diffuse upon All his Creatures  
thro' the Immense Universe and thro' a  
Boundless Eternity, every good thing  
that is *proper* for them, every thing that  
tends to their *True* Happiness, every good  
which either *They* are in their own Na-  
ture *capable* of *receiving*, or which for  
*Him*, in his All-wise Government of the  
Whole, is *fit and reasonable* to give.

AND from hence, by the way, 'tis e-  
vident demonstrably, that there is not,  
there *cannot be* any such thing, as *absolute*  
*and unconditionate Reprobation*. For,  
This being a matter wholly contradictory  
to all our Notions of Goodness; if abso-  
lute and irresistible *Sovereignty* could suf-  
fice (as some Sects of men have imagined)  
to make such a thing become *Good*, it  
would follow that the word, *Goodness*,  
had no signification at all; and conse-  
quently, that it was neither *in itself* of  
any importance, nor of any consequence

SERM. to Us, whether the Almighty God was

XIV. Good or no. Than which, nothing can be affirmed more *unworthy* of the Creator of all things ; or be more deservedly reckoned among those *hard Speeches*, which if not *unrighteous*, yet at least rash *inconfi-*

Jude 15. *rate men, have spoken against him.*

2dly. HAVING thus therefore briefly explained in general *What Goodness is*, it will now be easy in the 2d place to prove, that God actually *is and cannot but be Good*, according to this general Notion of Goodness. For, Goodness being nothing else but a fixt Disposition, to do always what in the Whole is *Best*, and (so far as is consistent with *Right and Justice*) what is *most beneficial* to All ; 'tis evident that the Supreme Being, having all *Knowledge*, so that his *Understanding* can never *err* in *judging* what is *Best* ; and having *no Want* of any thing to complete his *own Happiness*, so that his *Will* can never be influenced by any *wrong Affection*, or have any possible *Temptation* laid before it to act otherwise than according to what he knows is *Best* ; 'tis from hence, I say, very evident to Reason, that the Supreme Cause, being thus necessarily *Happy* in the

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the eternal injoyment of his own infinite S E R M.  
Perfections, and altogether incapable of XIV.  
being tempted with Evil; could not possibly have any other Motives to make any  
Creatures at all, but only that he might communicate to them his own Perfections,  
Goodness and Happiness; according to *their different Capacities*, arising from  
that *Variety of Natures*, which 'twas fit for *infinite Wisdom* to produce; and according  
to *their different Improvements*, and *Deserts*, arising from that *Liberty*,  
which is essentially Necessary to the Constitution of *Intelligent and Active Beings*.  
God therefore, is *Necessarily* and *Essentially Good*. And yet, even *This necessity*  
arising wholly from the unalterable Rectitude of his *Will*, (whereas his *natural* Attributes,  
such as Knowledge and Power, arise immediately from absolute *Necessity of Nature*;) there is  
therefore *This difference*, that, whilst for his *Power*, *Knowledge*, and the like, we can only  
*admire and adore* him, for his *Goodness* we return him moreover *Praise and Thanks*. For  
which reason, the Scripture not only constantly confirms, what natural Reason  
teaches us, that God is Good; but represents

SERM. fents it also as the Attribute wherein he  
 XIV. chiefly *delights*; and describes it always in  
 the tenderest and most affectionate expressions. *Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*, Ps. ciii. 13. *I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the Earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord*, Jer. ix. 24. and Is. xlix. 15. *Can a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee*. In the second commandment, when God had threatned judgments to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him; To show how much more he delights in rewarding than in punishing, he promises mercy unto *Thousands* of them that love him and keep his commandments. And 'tis not without a very significant and expressive emphasis, that our Saviour so remarkably affirms, St. Mar. x. 18. *There is none Good, but One, that is God*. But This in general.

3dly, I proposed in the 3d place to set forth distinctly, in what particular Instances the Divine Goodness has more peculiarly



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culiarly displayed itself. And here, to go S E R M.  
through all the works, of Creation, Pro- XIV.  
vidence and Redemption; is a Subject

which the Tongues of Men and Angels,  
shall never be able to exhaust. For the  
Goodness of God is *boundless* as his uni-  
versal Works, and *endless* as the Ages of  
Eternity. *Who can express the noble acts*  
*of the Lord, or show forth all his Praise?*

Pf. cvi. 2. By the Goodness of God, was  
that incomprehensible Variety of Creatures  
brought into *Being*, which of themselves  
would never have existed: And a *further*  
Mark of the *Fountain* from which they  
all proceed, is that Character given things  
upon their first production, that God be-  
held every thing which he had made, and,  
in their respective kinds and degrees, they  
were *each* of them *very Good*. By the  
same *Goodness*, is suitable Provision made  
for the *Preservation* of all things, for  
their proper *Continuance* and *Well-being*:

Pf. civ. 27. They all wait upon Thee, that  
thou mayest give them their meat in due  
season; Thou openest thine hand, and satisf-  
fiest the desire of every living Thing; He  
maketh the grass to grow upon the moun-  
tains, and giveth to the beast his food, and

Pf. cxlv.

15  
cxlvii. 9.

to

S E R M. *to the young ravens which cry unto him.*

XIV. And Mat. vi. 26. *The fowls of the Air, saith our Saviour, neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into Barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. And the lillies of the field toil not; neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of Them: Like one of Them, whom Nature has adorned with what no Art can express, and clothed them with inimitable Beauty. In Man still more particularly, has the Goodness of God appeared, in giving him so excellent and noble a Being: Thou madest him a little lower than the Angels, and crownedst him with glory and honour; Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things in subjection under his Feet, Ps. viii. 5. He has indued us with Reason, Understanding, and Knowledge, not only sufficient to preserve our Dominion over the Creation; but such as moreover inables us, to contemplate, to adore, and to imitate, our great Creator himself. The Apostle alleges This, as a particular instance of the divine Goodness, Jam. i. 17, 5. Every Good and every perfect Gift (that is, every*

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ry perfection of our nature, and especially S E R M.  
every religious qualification,) is from above, XIV.  
and cometh down from the Father of  
Lights, --- who giveth to all men liberally,  
and upbraideth not. In the whole course of  
our lives, his Goodness prevents numberless  
Evils from falling upon us; which, with  
all our Reason und Understanding, we  
could by no means either prevent or a-  
void. And under actual Evils, which the  
Wisdom of his unerring Providence thinks  
fit not to prevent, he relieves and com-  
forts and supports men under them; And  
frequently affords a Remedy, by *Tempo-  
ral Deliverances*: Or if he sees *That* not  
fit, yet (which is a much greater Instance  
and Exercise of Goodness) he always makes  
provision for mens *eternal Happiness*,  
if by their own Perverseness they neglect  
not the Means which he has afforded them  
for That End. He has indued them with  
*Reason* and *natural Conscience*, to distin-  
guish between Good and Evil; and to  
forewarn them, as it were by an inward  
and perpetual Instinct, of the certainty of  
a future Judgment. He has confirmed this  
natural Conscience, with the additional  
Help of an exprefs *Revelation*; and has  
declared,

SERM. declared, that according to the several

XIV. *Degrees* of mens Knowledge in these mat-

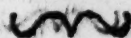
ters, he will require of them a severer or less severe Account, in such manner as becomes the Judge of the whole Earth to do right. And in the mean time, that Sinners may, if possible, be brought to Repentance; he, with much long-suffering and forbearance, defers their Punishment; and, if they *do* repent, he forgives and pardons them, as a *Father* receives a returning Child, nay, even as a *Shepherd* rejoices over a Sheep that had been lost. And This is That *Part* of *Goodness*, which is strictly and properly distinguished by the Name of *Mercy*. God being our Creator and Supreme Governour, and it being our necessary and most reasonable Duty to obey at all times his Laws in every particular; 'tis plain that every wilful Transgression justly deserves Punishment; And *after* such Transgression, our best Obedience being nothing more than was our Duty *before* it, 'tis evident that in strict *Justice* God is not obliged, in consideration of what is *to come*, to forgive what is *past*: In *strictness* of *Justice*, I say, God was under *no* obligation to pardon



don Sinners upon their Repentance; but S E R M.  
 his Goodness *only* moved him to have XIV.  
 compassion upon them; And the *Effect*  
 of That compassion, was the Coming of  
 Christ. It has sometimes been apprehend-  
 ed otherwise, that the interposition of  
 Christ was the *Cause* of God's mercy and  
 compassion towards Sinners: But the  
*Scripture* always represents this matter  
 the *other* way, more to the Honour and  
 Exaltation of the divine Goodness; that  
 'twas the *original Mercy* and free Com-  
 passion of God, which moved him to *send*  
 his Son to mediate on our behalf. Thus  
 our Saviour himself expresses it, *Job. iii.*  
*16. God so loved the world, that he gave*  
*his only-begotten Son:* He does not say,  
*the only-begotten Son prevailed with God*  
*to love the world;* but, the *Love and*  
*Compassion* of God towards his Creatures,  
 prevailed with him to *send* his Son into  
 the world. *God, of his own original e-*  
*ternal essential Goodness, so loved the*  
*world, that, in pity towards fallen Man-*  
*kind he appointed This method of reco-*  
*very, and gave his only-begotten Son, that*  
*whosoever believeth in him, should not pe-*  
*rish, but have everlasting Life.* Thus also  
 St

SERM. St Paul; God, saith he, (that is, God the  
 XIV. Father,) commendeth his Love towards us,  
 in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ  
 died for us, Rom. v. 8. And St John, in  
 his first epistle, ch. iv. 8, 9. God, saith he,  
 is Love; and In This was manifested the  
 Love of God towards us, because that God  
 sent his only-begotten Son into the world,  
 that we might live through him.

THESE declarations of Scripture are  
 so express, that they seem intended on  
 purpose to prevent all possibility of Mis-  
 take in this matter. And those men (of  
 whatsoever Sect they be) who speak other-  
 wise, speak not honourably enough of the  
 divine Goodness, while they represent the  
 Supreme Majesty of Heaven as an Object  
 of Fear and Dread only, and not of Love;  
 Investing him, in the conceptions they  
 frame of him, with Dominion and Power  
 and the Terrors of unrelenting Justice,  
 but not sufficiently attending to his es-  
 sential Goodness; which is the Attribute  
 wherein he chiefly delights; and which  
 he always exercises, so far as is consistent  
 with Justice and Wisdom and good Go-  
 vernment; and of which, the sending a  
 Person of such Dignity as his only-be-  
 gotten



gotten Son, to reconcile Sinners to Himself consistently with Justice, by his exemplary Humiliation, by his Life and Doctrine, by his sufferings and Death, by his Exaltation and Intercession for us; of the Goodness, I say, of God the Supreme Father and Lord of all, This is an unparalleled and everlasting Instance.

But 4thly, AGAINST this whole Notion of the divine Goodness, there are two very great *Objections*, which deserve distinctly to be considered; Namely, the *Evils* which God permits to happen in the present Life, and the *Punishments* which he inflicts in that which is to come.

As to the *Evils* which happen in the present Life; the antient *Persian* Philosophers (and after Them the *Manichees* in later Ages) fancied, that there was an infinite *Evil* Principle, independent upon, and opposite to, the infinite *Good* one. Against These, *Esaias* declares, in his prophecy to *Cyrus* King of *Persia*, *Is. xlv.* 7. I form the Light and create Darknes, I make Peace, and create Evil; I the Lord do all these things. The meaning is: There is no Evil happens in the

S E R M.

XIV.

world, but what for wise ends is permitted by the Providence, of the One infinitely Good God.

To instance in particulars. All that we call *Evil* in the present Life, is either merely an *Evil of Imperfection*, such as the Want of certain Faculties and Excellencies which other Creatures enjoy; Or *Natural Evil*, such as Pain, Death, and the like; Or *Moral Evil*, such as are all kinds of Debauchery, Sin, and Vice. The First of These, viz. mere *Imperfection*, is not properly an *Evil*. For every Power, Faculty, or Perfection, which Any Creature enjoys, being the *Free Gift* of God, which he was no more obliged to bestow, than he was to confer Being or Existence itself; 'tis plain, the mere *Want* of any certain Faculty or Perfection in Any kind of Creatures, which *Never* belonged to their Nature, is no more an *Evil* to Them, than their never having been created, or brought into Being at all, could properly have been called an *Evil*. The Second kind of Evil, which we commonly call *Natural Evil*, is either a necessary Consequence of the Former; as Death to a Creature on whose Nature Immor-

tality



rality was never conferred; And then 'tis S E R M.  
 no more properly an *Evil*, than the For- XIV.  
 mer: Or else 'tis balanced in the whole,   
 with as great or greater Good; as the  
*Afflictions and Sufferings of good men;*  
 And *Then also* 'tis not properly an *Evil*:  
 Or else, lastly, 'tis a *Punishment*; And  
 then 'tis a necessary consequent of the  
*Third* and last sort of *Evil*, viz. *Moral*  
*Evil*, which is *Debauchery, Sin, and Vice*.  
 And This arises wholly from the Abuse  
 of that *Liberty*, which God gave to his  
 Creatures for the most excellent Purposes,  
 and which 'twas *reasonable and fit and*  
*necessary* to give them for the Perfection  
 and Order of the whole Creation: But  
 they Themselves, contrary to God's inten-  
 tion and command, have abused what  
 was *necessary* for the Perfection of the  
*whole*, to the corruption and depravation  
 of *Themselves*; And thus all sorts of *E-*  
*vils* have entered into the world, with-  
 out any diminution to the infinite *Good-*  
*ness* of the Creator and Governour there-  
 of.

As to the *Punishments* which God will  
 inflict in the *Life to come*: Since all men  
 acknowledge proportionable *Punishments*

S E R M. to be necessary in all Governments whatsoever; and since the Kingdom and Government of God over the whole Universe, continues in the *future* state as well as in the *present*; 'tis plain we can have no just reason to presume, that the Punishments of incorrigible Sinners will be less useful to the Ends and Reasons of God's infinite Government *There*, than they are necessary in the Wisdom of his Providence *here*. Nor can the Goodness of God be more obliged to preserve wilful men from *perdition hereafter*, than he is bound to preserve the careless from a *Precipice at present*. The exact *Nature and Manner* indeed of the future Punishment of the Wicked, any further than is in general necessary to deter us from Sin, is not distinctly revealed to us. But concerning it there are *two* things most clearly declared in Scripture, abundantly sufficient to vindicate the Divine Goodness. *First*, that the *Degrees* of Punishment in that final and eternal state, shall be exactly proportionate to the Degree of mens Demerits; and even Damnation itself shall by the righteous Judge be inflicted in weight and measure. And *Secondly*, that the Punishment

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ment itself, absolutely speaking, shall at S E R M.  
the day of judgment, in the nature and XIV.  
reason of the thing, appear so just and  
necessary, that *every mouth, even of Sin-*  
*ners themselves, shall be stopped before*  
*God; stopped, not by Force and Power,*  
*but by the clear evidence of Right and*  
*Reason. And God, when he cometh with*  
*ten thousand of his Saints to execute judg-*  
*ment upon All, shall convince ungodly Sin-*  
*ners, not only of their ungodly deeds which*  
*they have committed, but of their hard*  
*speeches also which they have spoken against*  
*him, Jude xv. And when the Punishment*  
*of the wicked shall be actually inflicted*  
*upon them in the place of Torment, even*  
*This shall be, not only in the presence of*  
*God, but in the presence of the Holy An-*  
*gels also, and in the presence of the Lamb,*  
*Rev. xiv. 10. That is; it shall be such*  
*as is, not only appointed by the infinite*  
*Majesty of God the righteous Judge of all,*  
*but approved moreover by Men and An-*  
*gels, and by Him also himself, who loved*  
*us unto Death, even Christ our merciful*  
*and compassionate High-Priest.*

5thly, It remains in the 5th and last  
place, that I draw some *practical Infer-*

S E R M. ences from this whole Doctrine, concern-  
 XIV: ing the Divine Goodness.

And 1<sup>st</sup>, THE Goodness of God, is a Ground of perpetual *Praise and Thankfulness*. Ps. ciii. 2. *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits. Who forgiveth all thy Sin, and bealeth all thy infirmities. Who saveth thy Life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, IF God is infinitely Good; this makes him the most perfect Object, of our *Love*, as well as of our *Fear*. And tho' Obedience that proceeds from *Fear*, will be accepted to Salvation; yet when it proceeds from *Love*, it is more easy and pleasant, more free from the danger of Superstition, and from erroneous Circumstances of all kinds.

3<sup>dly</sup>, A just Sense of the *Goodness* of God, is apt to raise in generous minds a very strong hatred and indignation against Sin; when they consider that 'tis an offence, not only of Indignity against their Supreme Governour, but of *Ingratitude* also against their Benefactor; Whose Commands are all given them, not for *his own* Sake, but for *theirs*; Not that their



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their Obedience is of any Advantage to S E R M.  
Him, but for *their own* Benefit only, and XIV.  
everlasting Happiness. 

4thly, **THOUGH** the *Goodness* of God be, like all his other Attributes, truly infinite; yet let not Sinners *presume* upon it to their own destruction. For, infinite as it is, it extends not to *Devils*, it extends not to *impenitent Sinners*, it extends not to the *destruction of Justice and Virtue and good Government*. Even as infinite *Power*, extends only to the *Objects of Power*, not to *Impossibilities*. God loves his Creatures, beyond the Love of the tenderest and most compassionate Father; but still always with this *one* exception, that he loves *Virtue, Righteousness, and Goodness*, still better than them. And against *no* sort of Sinners does the Scripture speak with greater *Indignation* of Severity, than against those who presumptuously make the *Goodness* of God an occasion of sinning, and turn even the *Grace* of God *itself* into Wantonness. *Deut. xxix.*  
19. *If it come to pass, when a man heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of*

S. E. R. M. my heart: The Lord will not spare him,

XIV. but the Anger of the Lord shall smoke against that man, and all the Curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him.

And 'tis recorded in the book of Kings for an everlasting memorial, that when God pardoned Manasseh upon his true Repentance after many years wickedness, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty and five years; his Son Amon presuming upon the Goodness of God to imitate his Father's wickedness, was cut off in his Sin after only two years reign.

5thly, THE Goodness of God, is an example for Us to imitate. Does He who has all Power absolutely in his own hands, cause his Sun to shine on the Evil and on the Good, and send his rain on the just and on the unjust, doing good to All, and extending his mercy over all his works? And shall frail mortals, shall vain and sinful men, tyrannize over each other? Shall God forgive us freely ten thousand talents? and shall We not forgive each other our one hundred pence? especially when, in our daily Prayer, our Lord has taught us to make This the exprefs condition of our own desiring Forgiveness? And the Reason

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Reason of the thing, is elegantly expressed S E R M.  
by the Son of Sirach, Eccclus. xxviii. 3, 4. XIV.

*One man beareth hatred against another,  
and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?  
He sheweth no mercy to a man which is like  
himself, and doth he ask forgiveness of his  
own Sins?*

*Lastly, THE consideration of the divine  
Goodness is an encouragement to Repent-  
ance; seeing he requires of us no impos-  
sible, no hard condition; but only faith  
unto us, Wash and be clean, Amend and  
be forgiven. Yet at the same time it  
shows also to Sinners the absolute Neces-  
sity of their Reformation; seeing, without  
such Reformation, even infinite Goodness  
itself will not pardon them, tho' it waits  
with much long-suffering for their Re-  
pentance and Amendment.*

S E R M O N

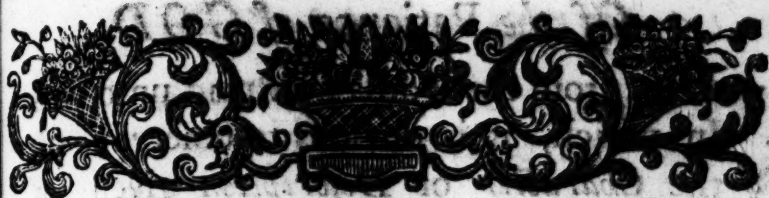
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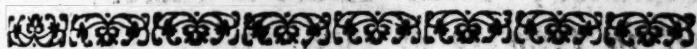






# SERMON XV.

## *Of the PATIENCE of GOD.*



ECCLES. viii. II.

*Because sentence against an evil  
work is not executed speedily,  
therefore the Heart of the Sons of  
Men, is fully set in them to do  
Evil.*



ONCERNING the Goodness of SERM.  
God in general, I have dis- XV.  
coursed already upon another  
occasion: Concerning that  
*particular Branch* of Good-  
ness, which consists in deferring the Pu-  
nishment of evil-doers, and is properly  
distinguished by the Name of *Patience* or  
*Long-suffering*, I intend at this time to  
treat

S E R M. treat, from the words now read unto you.

XV. In which, it is obvious to observe, 1<sup>st</sup>, the *Character or Description* given, of the divine *Patience and Long-suffering*; It consists in *This*, that *Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The *ill Use* that wicked and profane Men are too apt to make of the divine forbearance; Their *Heart is thereby fully set in them to do evil*. 3<sup>dly</sup>, The *Folly and Absurdity* of thus abusing the *Patience of God*; forasmuch as *Sentence against every evil work, tho' it be not speedily executed, yet is certainly passed*; and, if the Sinner amends not, will also *certainly be executed*; and That, the more *severely* too, because *not speedily*.

I. HERE is a *Character or Description* given, of the divine *Patience and Long-suffering*; It consists in *This*, that *Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily*. The *Design and Reason* of which Delay, is declared to us by St Paul, Rom. ii. 4. *The Riches of the Goodness and Forbearance and Long-suffering of God, which leadeth thee to Repentance*; And St Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15, *The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise*,

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as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that Any should perish, but that All should come to Repentance; —wherefore, beloved, —account that the long-suffering of our Lord, is Salvation. The Reason of God's delaying Punishment, is to bring Men to Repentance; and to vindicate his Justice and Goodness in their destruction, if, after all his forbearance, they continue finally impenitent: Rom. ix, 22. He endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; fitted to destruction, by their own wickedness; and making that destruction necessary and inevitable, by their despising the Patience and Long-suffering of God. The incomprehensible Majesty of God, stands in need of none of our Services, nor receives any Advantage from our Amendment and Return to him: yet he bears with us much more, than frail and passionate Men are willing to bear with men like themselves, tho' their well-being entirely depends on the Services which they do each other. There is no obligation upon God in strictness to spare Sinners at all; but, if he pleased, he might with justice cut them off immediately;



S E R M. diately; and could *with ease* even out of the  
 XV.



Stones of the Street raise up children unto  
*Abraham*, that is, create new and better  
 creatures, who should obey him in bring-  
 ing forth the Fruits of Righteousness: Yet,  
 in great compassion, he chuses rather to  
 invite *Sinners* to Repentance; and with  
 much unwillingness inflicts at last That  
 Punishment, which their incorrigibleness  
 makes *necessary* even for *Goodness* itself,  
 in the administration of the Supreme Go-  
 vernment of the Universe, to inflict.  
*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?*  
*how shall I deliver thee, O Israel? how*  
*shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I*  
*set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned*  
*within me, my repentings are kindled to-*  
*gether, Hos. xi. 8. And Jer. ix. 7. I will*  
*melt them and try them; for how shall I*  
*do for the daughter of my people?* These  
 are very eloquent and affectionate descrip-  
 tions of what the Psalmist declares in a  
 direct and less figurative manner, *Pf. ciii.*  
*8. The Lord is full of Compassion and*  
*Mercy, Long-suffering and of great Good-*  
*ness; ---He hath not dealt with us after*  
*our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our*  
*Wickednesses; ---Like as a Father pitieth*



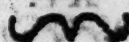
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his own children; even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him; For he knoweth whereof we are made, he remembereth that we are but dust. And Ps. lxxxi.

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12. My people would not hear my voice, and Israel would not obey me; So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations. O, that my people would have hearkned unto me; for if Israel had walked in my ways, I should soon have put down their Enemies,

&c. The particular Instances which the Scripture gives us of this Patience and Forbearance of God towards Sinners, are very remarkable; and such as may give us a truer Notion of this divine Attribute, than can be done by any verbal Description. When God had threatned to *Adam*, that in the day he eat of the forbidden Fruit, he should surely die; he did indeed accordingly, in that very day, become inevitably subject to Mortality; being from thenceforward excluded the Benefit of the Tree of Life. But the actual execution of That sentence of Death was deferred for many years, that by Repentance and better obedience for the future, he might escape the much severer Punishment of

Death

**SERM.** Death eternal. When the whole World  
**XV.** had corrupted themselves in the days of  
*Noah*, and God resolved to destroy them  
 all with a Flood; yet *St Peter* observes,  
*1 Pet. iii. 20.* that the Long-suffering of  
 God waited, while the Ark was prepa-  
 ring; in all which time, *Noah* was unto  
 them a Preacher of Righteousness, to have  
 deterred them (if possible) from their dis-  
 obedience. After this, in the case of *So-*  
*dom and Gomorrha*, God sent *Lot* into  
 those Cities, to be unto them a Teacher  
 and an Example of Righteousness:  
 Whose righteous Soul when they had vex-  
 ed day by day with their Impieties, and  
 the Cry of their Wickedness was become  
 exceeding great before God; yet, to set  
 forth the Greatness of the Divine Pati-  
 ence, God represents himself to *Abraham*,  
 as resolving to respite the Destruction of  
 those Cities, if he could find even but  
 ten righteous Persons therein. The mean-  
 ing of which, is not that God will al-  
 ways spare a wicked Nation, whenever  
 there shall be found therein a certain de-  
 terminate Number of good men; but only  
 to show in general God's unwillingness  
 to destroy, where-ever there appears Any

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Hope or Foundation of Amendment. S E R M.  
And because these Cities, *when* destroyed, XV.

were set forth to *Us* as an *Example*, *suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire*, that is, of That Fire which finally consumed them, so that they never were built again: therefore 'tis reasonable to believe, that his Willingness to have saved them from That Destruction, was intended as a *Type*, to show us how unwilling he is, that Sinners should finally fall under That condemnation, of which the Fire of *Sodom* is set forth as a Resemblance. In following Ages: When the seven Nations of *Canaan* were to be dispossessed before the children of *Israel*, in order to bring *Them* into the promised Land which he had sworn to their Forefathers; *one* reason why they entred not in sooner, was *not* only because the *Jews* were not worthy to be so *blessed*, but because the *Canaanites* had not yet made it necessary for themselves to be so *cursed*. *The iniquity of the Amorites*, says the Scripture, *was not yet full*; and the Patience of God towards them, was not yet worn out. He who even out of the *Stones*, if need were, could have raised up *children* unto *Abraham*;

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could

S E R M. could much more, if he had so pleased,  
 XV. have provided a *Country* for the children of  
 Abraham to dwell in, without dispossessing for them any other people. But herein was displayed the Wisdom of the Great Governour of all things, that when the fulness of the iniquity of the *Amorites*, made it necessary for them to be dispossessed; then, and not till then, did he bring the *Ijraelites* to the borders of the promised Land. At the same time, did the Divine Patience bear with the provocations of the *Jews in the Wilderness*, forty years: Ps. lxxviii. 41, 38, 39. cvi. 23, 42, 43, 44. Many a time did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieved him in the desert: But he was so merciful, that he forgave their misdeeds, and destroyed them not: Yea, many a time turned he his wrath away, and would not suffer his whole Displeasure to arise: He said, he would have destroyed them, had not *Mōses* his chosen stood before him in the gap. Many a time were they brought down in their wickedness; nevertheless, when he saw their Adversity, he heard their Complaint; He thought upon his Covenant, and pitied them. In following Ages; That severe,

and



and as they had *Then* reason to apprehend, *unalterable* sentence against *Niniveb*; yet *forty days and Niniveb shall be destroyed*; was on the contrary intended in the wise Counsels of Providence, to be a standing Example of God's Patience towards Sinners. For the *Ninevites*, in that time of respite, turned from their evil deeds; and the Lord also repented him of the Evil which he said he would do unto them, and he did it not, *Jonah iii. 10.* Lastly, in the Case of *Jerusalem*, that perpetual Type of the whole Church; how affectionately and with what a moving eloquence does our Saviour express the Patience and the Long-suffering of God. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Matt. xxiii. 37.* And with what a mixture of tender compassion and forbearance, is that Threatning denounced against *all* wicked men in general, *Rev. ii. 21. I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not: Behold, I will cast her into a bed; and them that com-*

S E R M.  
XV.  
~~~~~

S E R M. *mit adultery with her into great Tribulation,*
 XV. *except they repent of their Deeds. This*
 therefore is the Character of the Divine
 Patience: Generally speaking, *Sentence a-*
gainst an evil work is not executed speedily.

II. T H E Text represents unto us, the
ill Use that wicked men are too apt to
 make, of this divine forbearance: there-
 fore *the Heart of the Sons of Men, is*
fully set in them to do evil. Therefore;
 That is, not that there is any *reason*, not
 that there is any just *ground*; not that
 any good *Argument* to incourage Men
 in their Disobedience, can be drawn from
 the Long-suffering of God: But that in
Fact, and by sad *experience*, it appears
 too frequently *True*; that wicked men are
 apt to deceive themselves, with so *absurd*,
 so *groundless*, so *unreasonable* a Proceed-
 ing. *Because* God punishes them not *im-*
mediately, but gives them space of repen-
 tance; therefore they absurdly *presume*, or
 carelessly go on *as if they presumed*, that
 2 Pet. iii. 4. *he would not punish them at all. Where*
is the Promise, (where is the Threatning.)
of his Coming? For since the Fathers fell
asleep, all things continue as they were,
from the beginning of the Creation. Upon
 I This

This ground ; Come ye, say they (as the S E R M
 prophet *Isaiab* elegantly represents them,) XV.
I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves II. lvi. 12.
with strong drink ; and to morrow shall be
as This day, and much more abundant.
 and *Wisd. 2. 6. Come on therefore, let us*
injoy the good things that are present ; and
let us speedily use the Creatures like as in
youth. Thus wicked and debauched per-
 sons, in the days of riot, are apt to flatter
 themselves ; *He hath said in his Heart,*
I shall never be cast down, there
shall no harm happen unto me, Ps. x. 6. or,
 as it is the new translation, *I shall never*
be in adversity. That Thus it was in anti-
 ent days, the Prophet *Isaiab* complains,
ch. xxvi. 10. Let favour be showed to the
Wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness ;
in the land of uprightness will he deal un-
justly, and will not behold the Majesty of
the Lord. And that Thus it will continue
 to be, among incorrigible Men, to the
 end of the World ; our Saviour plainly de-
 clares, *Mat. xxiv. 38. As in the days*
that were before the Flood, they were eat-
ing and drinking, marrying and giving in
marriage, untill the day that Noah entred
into the ark, And knew not untill the Flood
 A a 3 came

SERM. came, and took them all away; So shall al-

XV. *so the Coming of the Son of Man be.* This is the ill Use, that wicked men are too apt to make, of the divine forbearance. Instead of being led thereby to repentance, (which is what God gives them space for;) they on the contrary thence promise themselves final impunity, and their heart is more fully set in them to do evil. How absurd This their Conclusion is; and how foolish their Practise, in thus abusing the Patience and Long-suffering of God; is the

III^d HEAD I proposed to speak to: And it will abundantly appear, from the following Considerations.

1st. SIN is not therefore the less evil in itself, because not always punished immediately. All Wickedness, is an endeavouring to confound the natural order and reason of Things: 'tis a dishonouring of ourselves, as we are created rational and intelligent Beings; 'tis injurious to other Men, as tending always to subvert that Peace and Happiness of the World, which the Wisdom of Providence has appointed to consist, in the Practise of universal Righteousness, of Justice, Truth, and
Charity

Charity among Men ; 'Tis, finally, offering the highest Affront to God the Supreme Governour of *All* ; who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; and whose principal Concern it is, not to suffer that Great Distinction of Things, the Difference of Good and Evil, to be for ever neglected and despised. *Flee therefore from Sin*, says the wise Author of the Book of *Ecclus. ch. xxi. 2. Flee from Sin, as from the Face of a Serpent ; The Teeth thereof, are as the Teeth of a Lion, slaying the Souls of Men ; All iniquity is as a two-edged Sword, the Wounds whereof cannot be healed* : Cannot ; that is, cannot without much greater Difficulty be healed, than careless Sinners are willing to perswade themselves.

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XV.

2. As *Sin* is not in itself the less evil, because not always punished immediately ; so neither ought it to be imagined, that God is therefore the less provoked, because there appear not in Him, as in vain Mortals, any sudden Transports of hasty Passion. God, is pure and unmixt Reason ; and, as all his other Actions are without any emotion in himself, so he punishes also, not that he has any pleasure in so doing, but that the thing is in itself right and necessary

S E R M. cessary to be done. When therefore he
 XV. has born with Sinners, as long as Wisdom
 and Goodness thinks reasonable to bear
 with them; his Patience, after That,
 will have an End: *Luk. xiii. 7. Then said
 he to the dresser of his Vineyard, behold,
 these three years I come seeking fruit on this
 fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why
 cumbereth it the ground? The Spirit of
 God, will not always strive with man;
 neither will he suffer himself to be mocked,
 and his Laws finally to be trampled upon.
 The Holy Spirit of Discipline will flee
 from Deceit, (Wisd. i. 5.) and will re-
 move from Thoughts that are without under-
 standing, and will not abide when unright-
 eousness cometh in. Long did the Patience
 of God bear with the Jews in the Wil-
 derness, in the day of their provocation;
 but at length, he sware unto them in his
 wrath, that they should not enter into his
 rest, *Pf. xcv. 11. In Pf. cvi. 26. 'tis thus
 expressed; he lifted up his hand against
 them, to overthrow them in the Wilder-
 ness: He lifted up his hand, that is, he
 sware unto them; so That phrase signifies
 in the Hebrew; and so it ought therefore
 to have been translated in one Psalm, as
 well**

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well as in the *other*; and cannot otherwise be rightly understood. Again, When God had threatned by *Jonah*, that yet *forty days and Niniveh shall be destroyed*; and after That, upon their repentance, God also repented of the evil he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not: yet *forty years* after, when they relapsed again, *Niniveh* was destroyed: and the prophecy, which *Jonah* murmured to see disappointed, as he thought; was in its time, according to the exactness of the Prophetick style, punctually accomplished: as is observed in the last chapter of the book of *Tobit*, ver. 8 and 15. Lastly, *Jerusalem itself*, over which our Saviour had expressed such tender and affectionate compassion; yet had at length, for its impenitency, that *final* Sentence pronounced against it, *Matt. xxiii. 38. Behold, your House is left unto you desolate*; and *ch. xxiv. 2. There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*. The Application of these examples to every one of *Us*, is made by *St Paul* in that earnest Admonition, *Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that*

SERM. *that the goodness of God leadeth thee to*
 XV. *Repentance? But after thy hardness and*
 ~~~~~ *impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself*  
*wrath against the day of wrath, and re-*  
*velation of the righteous judgment of God?*  
 The natural and proper effect of the di-  
 vine forbearance, is to lead Sinners to Re-  
 pentance: And if it has not that effect,  
 but they on the contrary abuse his Pa-  
 tience and despise his admonitions, ad-  
 ding to their Sin perverse ingratitude, and  
 most disingenuous Obstinacy to their Re-  
 bellion; the Scripture assures us that the  
 Time will come, when they shall cry, and  
 shall not be heard; but He also shall laugh  
 at their calamity, and mock when their  
 Fear cometh; when their Fear cometh as  
 desolation, and their destruction as a whirl-  
 wind. Upon which Account, excellent is  
 the Advice of the Son of Sirach, Eccles.  
 v. 4. Say not, I have sinned, and what harm  
 has happened to me? for though the Lord  
 is long-suffering, he will in no wise let thee  
 go: ----- Say not, his mercy is great, he  
 will be pacified for the multitude of my  
 Sins; For mercy and Wrath come from him,  
 and his indignation resteth upon Sinners.

Prov. i.  
26.



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3dly, As it does not follow that God is S E R M.  
*less Angry* with Sinners, because he *defers* XV.  
punishing them; so neither can it be in-  
ferred, that the Punishment of Sin is at  
all the *less Certain and Unavoidable*, for  
not being inflicted *immediately*. Among  
Men, every *delay* is a possibility of *Esca-*  
*ping*; because *Time and Chance happeneth*  
*to them All*: And whatever is at a *distance*,  
is for that very reason proportionably *un-*  
*certain* whether it shall ever come to pass  
at all. But with *God*, Time makes no dif-  
ference in the Certainty of Events; nei-  
ther can any intervening Accidents ever  
disappoint *His* purpose. *Though a Sinner*  
*do evil an hundred times, and his days be*  
*prolonged; yet surely* (says the Wise-man)  
*I know that it shall be well with them that*  
*fear God; But it shall not be well with*  
*the Wicked*, Eccles. viii. 12. And St Pe-  
ter elegantly confutes this foolish Hope of  
Sinners, 2 ep. iii. 4. *There shall come Scof-*  
*fers, walking after their own lusts, and*  
*saying, Where is the Promise of his Com-*  
*ing? for since the Fathers fell asleep, all*  
*things continue as they were, from the be-*  
*ginning of the Creation:— But, beloved,*  
*be not ignorant of this one thing, that one*  
*day*

SERM. *day is with the Lord as a thousand Years,*  
 XV. *and a thousand years as One day.* (Not  
 that the one is with God *literally* no  
 longer a Duration than the other, as  
 the Schoolmen have foolishly taught,  
 who love to make absurdities even out  
 of the plainest things; But the mean-  
 ing is, that What is as a thousand Years  
 distance, is with God as *Certain*, as if it  
 was to be effected by the very next mo-  
 ment.) *The Lord is not slack concerning his*  
*Promise, as some men count slackness; but*  
*is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing*  
*that Any should perish, but that All should*  
*come to Repentance. But the day of the*  
*Lord will come, as a Thief in the Night.*

4thly, As the Punishment of Sin, is  
 not the *less* Certain for being delayed, so  
 neither will it be the *less* Severe. *Justice*  
 (as all the *other* Attributes also are) is in  
 the Divine Nature *Necessary*. That is:  
 Not that Supreme Power has not a *na-*  
*tural Right* to pardon freely whom he  
 pleases, (as some have vainly imagined;) *but*  
 that, *morally* speaking, it is as *Neces-*  
*sary* in the Government of the Universe,  
 that infinite *Wisdom* should finally *punish*  
 the *incurable*; as that infinite *Patience*  
 should

should bear with such as are capable of SERM.  
*Amendment*, and infinite Mercy should XV.  
 pardon such as do *actually amend*. The  
 Punishment of the *Fallen Angels*, the  
 bringing in of the general *Flood*, and the  
*Overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah*, are  
*Examples* of this kind, written on pur-  
 pose for our Admonition. *Jude vi.* The  
*Angels which kept not their first estate*, he  
*has reserved in chains under darkness*, unto  
*the judgment of the great day*. And the  
 Application is expressly made by *St Peter*,  
*2 ep. ii. 4,---9.* If God spared not the  
*Angels that sinned*, but cast them down to  
*hell; --- And spared not the Old world,*  
*--- but brought in the Flood upon the*  
*world of the ungodly; And turned the Ci-*  
*ties of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes;*  
*making them an example unto those that*  
*after should live ungodly: If God did*  
*these things of old; the Inference is, The*  
*Lord still knoweth how --- to reserve the*  
*unjust unto the day of judgment to be pu-*  
*nished.* And of all unjust persons, none  
 more exemplarily; than those who there-  
 fore presume to abuse the Patience of  
 God, because *Sentence against an Evil*  
*work is not executed speedily.* *Deut. xxix.*

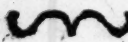
SERM. 19. *If, when a man heareth the words of*  
 XV. *this Curse, he bless himself in his heart,*  
*saying, I shall have peace, though I walk*  
*in the imagination of my heart; The Lord*  
*will not spare him, but the anger of the*  
*Lord shall smoke against that man, and all*  
*the Curses that are written in this book*  
*shall lie upon him. Jerusalem, and the*  
*Nation of the Jews, are at this day a*  
*standing Instance of this great Truth:*  
*Whom, after long forbearance and repeat-*  
*ed admonitions, God at last overthrew*  
*with such a total Destruction, as never*  
*befel any other Nation under Heaven.*  
*Besides: From the Sufferings even of good*  
*men, the profane and impenitent may well*  
*collect, that the divine Patience will not*  
*permit them to go for ever unpunished.*  
 1 Pet. iv. *Judgment, says the Apostle, must begin at*  
 17. *the house of God; and if it first begin at*  
*us, what shall the end be of them that*  
*obey not the gospel of God. And if the*  
*righteous scarcely be saved, where shall*  
*the Ungodly and the Sinner appear? The*  
*Judgments of God in this present Life,*  
*which fall upon mixt multitudes of good*  
*and bad, are frequently very terrible:*  
*Who then shall bear the vengeance of his*  
 I *final*



final Wrath, when he shall have separated entirely the Goats from the Sheep, into the proper place of Torment? Tho' even *There* also, exact Justice shall reign; and *Damnation itself* shall be inflicted, with perfect accuracy of *Weight and Measure*. S E R M.  
XV.

5thly and lastly; As the Punishment of Sin, neither is the less certain, nor will be the less severe, for being usually delayed; so neither can a Sinner from thence at any time depend, that it shall not overtake him the very next moment. For whenever it comes upon an impenitent Debauchee, it surprizes him as a Thief in the Night; and the Execution of Sentence against an evil work, how long soever delayed, yet when it comes, seems as speedy as if no Space had intervened. As the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly on them. Vain therefore and foolish, beyond all other Instances of Folly, is the behaviour of those impenitent Sinners, whose heart is therefore set in them to do evil, because their Lord delayeth his coming. Of which  
Divine

SERM. Divine Forbearance if they make not

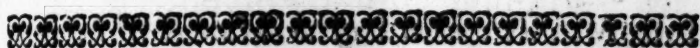
XV.  That Use for which it was designed, so as to be led thereby to Repentance; their Lord will *come in a day when they think not of it, and at an hour which they are not aware of, and will cut them in sunder, and appoint them their portion with Unbelievers; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* Thus the *Justice* and *Mercy*, the *Severity* and the *Patience* of God, are perfectly consistent with each other; and together with *all the other* Attributes of the Divine Nature, unite uniformly in one and the same point; which is, the promoting everlasting Righteousness and true Virtue through the whole Creation. Which matter, whosoever seriously and wisely considers; will neither superstitiously dread the Power, nor despair because of the Justice, nor presume upon the Patience and Mercy of God; but will serve him with Fear, and adore him with Love, and be led to Repentance by Hope, and improve daily more and more in the Practice of all Christian Virtues and Graces, till the time comes that he shall be made perfectly like unto God, because he shall see him as he is.

SERMON



# SERMON XVI.

## *Of the JUSTICE of GOD.*



JOB XXXIV. 10, 11, 12.

*Therefore hearken unto Me, ye men of Understanding : Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness ; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity : For the work of a Man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his Ways : Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment.*



THESE words are a very S E R M. lively and emphatical De- XVI. scription, of the Justice and Righteousness of the Supreme Governor of all things ; in-

troduced, with an affectionate Appeal to  
V O L. I. B b the

S E R M. the common Reason of Mankind, for the  
 XVI. *Truth of the Assertion; and closed, with*  
 an eloquent repetition, of the *Assurance*  
 of its Certainty. The *Assertion* of the Ju-  
 stice of God, is in *these words: Far be it*  
*from God, that He should do wickedness;*  
*and from the Almighty, that He should com-*  
*mit iniquity.* The *Description*, wherein  
 this Justice consists, is in the words which  
 follow: *The Work of a Man shall be ren-*  
*der unto him, and cause every man to find*  
*according to his Ways.* The Whole is in-  
 troduced, with an Appeal to the common  
*Sense and Reason of Mankind*, for the  
 Truth of what is here affirmed: *Heark-*  
*en unto Me, ye men of understanding;*  
*Far be it from God, that He should do*  
*wickedness.* And the Proposition is closed,  
 with an elegant repetition of the same As-  
 surance: *Yea, surely God will not do wick-*  
*edly, neither will the Almighty pervert*  
*judgment.* There are and will be *difficul-*  
*ties* in the administration of Providence;  
 But these *difficulties* affect only such as are  
*careless* in matters of Religion; and they  
 can never make *reasonable and considerate*  
*persons, men of attention and understanding,*  
 to doubt concerning the *Righteousness* of  
 the



## Of the Justice of GOD.

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the Divine Government: *Hearken unto Me, ye men of Understanding; Far be it from God, that He should do Wickedness.* SERM. XVI.

A righteous and just Man, may be depended upon that he will not do an unjust thing: Much more therefore, far be it from the Almighty, far be it from the Supreme Lord and Governour of all things, that He should commit iniquity. Many things *mysterious*, many things *incomprehensible*, there needs must be in the nature of the Supreme Being: But *Injustice or Iniquity, Hard or Unrighteous Dealing* with any of his Creatures; This, above all things, *far be it from him*; This, *whatever* we do, *far* ought we to keep it from all our Notions and Conceptions of him. *Objections* will be started, and *Difficulties* (in particular cases) cannot but arise: But whether we can answer them or no, we are *sure* they must be false; because no evidence can be *so strong*, in proof of any *particular* doctrine inconsistent with this Notion, as are the Arguments which prove in *general* the truth of the divine Justice. However therefore our short understanding may perhaps fail in reconciling things, yet the *Foundation*

SERM. must be stood to as being *demonstrably*  
 XVI. true, and what can *never* be moved; yea,  
 ~~~~~ surely God will not do wickedly, neither  
 will the Almighty pervert judgment.

MY Design in the following Discourse upon these words, is to *prove* briefly, that God is and cannot but be Just; to *explain* wherein the Nature of that Justice consists; to *remove* the *Objections* arising from *particular* cases against this *general* Truth; and finally, to *apply* what shall be said, by some *useful Inferences* in Practice. And

Ist, THAT the Supreme Lord and Governor of all things, is and cannot but be Just in all his Actions, may be made appear in the following manner. There being necessarily in Nature a *Difference* of Things, which is what we call *Natural* Good and Evil; and a Variety in the Dispositions and Qualifications of Persons, which is what we call *Moral* Good and Evil; from the due or undue adjustment of these *Natural Qualities* of Things to the *moral Qualifications* of Persons, arise unavoidably the Notions of *Right and Wrong*. Now the *Will* of every intelligent Agent, being always directed by
 some

some *Motive* ; 'tis plain the *natural Motive of Action*, where nothing irregular interposes, can be no other than *This Right, or Reason of Things*. Whenever therefore *This Right and Reason*, are not made the *Rule of Action* ; it can only be, either because the Agent is *ignorant* of what is Right, or wants Ability to pursue it, or else is *knowingly and willingly diverted from it* by the *Hope of some Good or Fear of some Evil*. But now None of these causes of Injustice, can possibly have any place in God : *His Actions* therefore must always necessarily be directed, by *Right and Reason and Justice only*. For, having *all Knowledge*, 'tis impossible he can be *deceived* in judging what is Right : having no *Want* of any thing, his *Will* cannot possibly be *influenced* by any *wrong Affection* ; and having no *Dependence*, his *Power* can never be limited by any *superiour Strength*. 'Tis very evident therefore, that He who *knows* thus *perfectly the Rule of Equity*, and necessarily *judges of things as they really Are* ; who has *complete Power* to execute Justice according to that Knowledge, and *no possible temptation* to deviate in the least there-

SERM. from ; who can neither be *imposed upon*
 XVI. by any *Deceit*, nor *moved* by any *Bias*,
 nor *awed* by any *Power* ; 'tis very evident (I say,) that such a Being, will always do what is *Right* ; without iniquity, and without partiality ; without prejudice, and without respect of Persons,

THERE is a shorter way, which has frequently been made use of, to prove that all the Actions of *God* must needs be *Just* ; by alleging, that whatever *He* does, is *therefore* Just, because *He* does it. Which Argument, is not *proving*, but *supposing*, the thing in Question : For, the *Reason why* God's doing a thing, proves it to be just ; is only upon This foundation, that, knowing him to be a perfectly Just Being, we are sure, if the thing had not been in itself just, he *would not* have done it. And in *This* sense indeed, the Argument is very good and reasonable. But those who use it, have generally turned it to a very different and very false Meaning : As if, because whatever *God* does, is certainly *Just* ; therefore, whatever *Unjust and Unreasonable* things they in their Systems of Divinity ascribe to him, were made *just and reasonable* by their supposing

supposing God to be the Author of them : S E R M.
Or, because the *Essence* of God is *incom-* XVI.
prehensible, and all his *Attributes* infinite-
ly *transcending* the Perfections of any fi-
nite Beings ; that therefore *Justice* in
Him, was not the same Thing, nor to
be judged of by the same Notions, as Ju-
stice among *Men* : Or that, God being
All-powerful, and having no Superiour to
render an account to of what he does ;
therefore *whatever* is ascribed to *Him*,
tho' *in itself* it may seem *unjust*, and
would be Unjust among Men, yet by Su-
preme Power is made *Just and Right*.
And upon *This* kind of Reasoning, is built
the Doctrine of *absolute Reprobation*, and
some other the like Opinions. But now,
in reality, *What* is this else, but speaking
deceitfully for God ; and destroying the
Truth of the divine Attributes, under the
appearance of defending them ? For if
every thing that *Power* can do, is Just ;
What then is *Justice*, but *mere* Power on-
ly, and not any thing *really* in the Na-
ture of Things ? And so, the worst and
most cruel Being in the World, with suffi-
cient *Power* annext, would in these men's
Sense, be as *Just*, as Supreme Goodness
itself.

S E R M. itself. The alleging in this manner the
 XVI. *Power of God*, to the destroying our moral Notion of *Justice*; is like alleging the same Power, in the case of Transubstantiation, to the destroying the natural Truth of *Things*. The Effect of *Both*, is the confounding the whole Nature of Truth and Falshood, of Right and Wrong; and making every thing to be unintelligible and without Meaning. One *sense* indeed there is, in which *Supreme Power* may be said to be the Foundation of *Justice*: And That is, because *such Power* sets the Person, who possesses it, above all possibility of being *tempted* or *compelled*, by any *Fraud* or by any *Force*, to do an unjust thing. And in *This* sense, the Argument seems to be used by *Elibu*, in the Text; *Job xxxiv. 10. Far be it from God*, (from Him who is Supreme over All,) *that He should do Wickedness; and from the Almighty*, (from Him who has Power over All,) *that He should commit iniquity*. And by the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, very elegantly; *ch. xii. ver. 12, 15, 16, 18. Who shall say, what hast Thou done? ---or Who shall accuse Thee for the Nations that perish, whom thou hast made?* or

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Who shall come to stand against thee, to S E R M.
be revenged for the unrighteous men? For, XVI
seeing thou art righteous thyself, thou orderest all things righteously; thinking it not agreeable with thy Power, to condemn him that hath not deserved to be punished: For thy Power is the beginning of Righteousness; and, because thou art Lord of All, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all. For Thou, mastering thy Power, judgest with equity, and orderest us with great favour; for Thou mayest use Power when thou wilt. In This sense, I say, Power may be affirmed indeed to be the foundation of Justice; as setting the Person, who is possessed of it, far above all temptation of doing wrong. But in any other sense; to make Power, the Measure of Justice; and to imagine that Justice in God, is not the same thing as Justice among Men; but something transcendent, and we know not what; is in reality subverting the Nature of Things, taking away the intrinsic difference between Good and Evil, and overturning the ground of all Religion. For, tho' the *Essence* of God, which it is *not* our business to understand, is really incomprehensible; as indeed are the
Essences

S E R M. *Essences of all other things; yet the Notion of his moral Attributes must be easy and familiar; and, if we could not understand These, the whole Doctrine of the Gospel would be insignificant to us. For, all Revelation from God, supposeth us to know beforehand what is meant by Justice, Goodness, and the like. So that no man can reasonably entertain any Notion of God, contradictory to These, upon any pretense whatsoever. And 'tis very absurd for any one to pretend, that we cannot understand what Justice in God is. For if we understand not This, 'tis all one to us whether God be just or not. Neither would it be possible for us, to imitate his Justice: For he who imitates, endeavours to be Like something that he Knows; and must of necessity understand, what 'tis he aims to be like. So that if we had no certain and settled Notion of the Justice and other Moral Attributes of God; Religion, which consists in the imitation of him, would be altogether unintelligible to our Minds and impossible to our Practise.*

AND

And All This is in Scripture so constantly supposed to be True, that God There perpetually *appeals* to the common Reason and natural Judgment of Mankind, for the Equity of his Dealings with them: For the Equity, not of *particular Providences*, which 'tis impossible men in this short period of life should be capable of observing; but he appeals to them for the Equity of his *general Laws* or Rules of Government. O House of Israel, are not my ways equal, are not your ways unequal? Ezek. xviii. 29. Judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and my Vineyard; What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Is. v. 3. St Paul in like manner, speaking of the Judgments of God, declares that *all Mouths shall be stopped before him*, not by the irresistibleness of his Power, but by the conviction of the *righteousness* and justice of his Sentence; Rom. iii. 4. cited from 51st Psalm, *That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged*. These are very plain and full declarations, both that God is *Just*; and that men are well capable of understanding *What* that Justice is, which is so eminent

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SER M. eminent a Perfection of the divine Nature. And to this *natural Sense* and *Knowledge of Right* it is, that our Saviour himself appeals, when he says, *Luc. xii. 57. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* and when he so often repeats it in his Preaching to the *Jews, He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*

HAVING thus proved *in general*, that God is and cannot but be Just; which was the *first* thing proposed: I proceed now in the

II^d place, To endeavour to explain *more particularly*, wherein the Nature of that Justice consists. And here it may be necessary to *premise*, that *Justice* is of two sorts; There is a Justice which consists in a distribution of *Equality*, and there is a Justice which consists in a distribution of *Equity*. The *former sort* belongs to such Persons, as have no other Authority, but only a Power of distributing to several persons *equally* their respective Dues: The *Latter sort* of Justice belongs to such a person, as having complete Right and Authority to do what he wills with his own, and distributing his
free

Of the Justice of GOD.

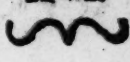
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free Gifts *variously* in *what proportion* he SERM.
pleases; afterward dispenses *equitably* Re- XVI.
wards and Punishments, according to the
different Use each man makes of the dif-
ferent Gifts he is respectively intrusted
with. And of This *latter* sort, is the
Justice of God. God is the Supreme Lord
and Author of all; and as all his Gifts are
free, 'tis evident he is under no more ob-
ligation to distribute them *equally*, than
he was originally obliged to distribute
them at all. He gives to one man after
This manner, and to another after That;
and then his Justice consists in dealing
with every one proportionably, according
to the Analogy of their different behaviour
under such different Circumstances. In
the matter of *Punishment*; his Justice re-
quires that it should always be apportioned
with the most strict exactness, to the Degree
or Demerit of the Crime: That is to say,
that no man must be punished *more* than
he deserves; though, on the contrary, He
that is Supreme over all, may accept of
as much *less* punishment, or may *remit*
punishment upon any such *free* conditions
of his own gracious appointment, as he
himself in the Wisdom and Goodness of
his

S E R M. his Government shall think fit and reasonable: And This, is the True Foundation
 XVI. of the Gospel-Mercy, made known to us from God by and through Christ. As to the Matter of *Reward*; Justice originally is not concerned at all; because at the best, men, even if they were sinless Creatures, are but unprofitable Servants; and, doing only what is their Duty to do, however they would have a Right to escape Punishment, yet they *could* have no claim of Merit to a Reward. But in consequence of God's free Promise, good men have a just title to the Reward promised them; And the Justice of God in the distribution of this Reward, consists in This, that they who by the Grace of God, and according to the merciful Tenor of the Gospel-Covenant, shall be found to have obeyed the Law of Righteousness, shall according to the proportion of the good Use they have made of their respective Gifts, have a proportionably greater share bestowed upon them of that future Happiness; the whole of which is merely God's free Gift indeed and undeserved Bounty, and yet at the same time such is good mens Title to it upon account of the Promise,

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mise, that the Apostle thought it not an S E R M.
improper expression, to say, *God is not* XVI
unrighteous, to forget your work and la-
bour of Love, Heb. vi. 10. 

Now this observation being *premised*,
for the preventing any mistake in the Ge-
neral Notion of the Divine Justice; the
Particulars *wherein* this Justice consists,
or which it principally *includes*, are these
which follow; *1st*, an *Impartiality*, with
regard to Persons; and *2dly*, an *Equity*
of Distribution, with regard to Things.
To the *Persons* of men he has *no Respect*;
but, in the final issue of Things, he will
upon the whole deal equitably with *all* his
creatures; and in the distribution of *Re-*
wards and Punishments in particular, he
will observe strictly an exact and righte-
ous *proportion*. *1st*, The Notion of di-
vine Justice, includes an absolute *Impar-*
tiality with regard to *Persons*. All men
are alike the Work of God's hands; and
therefore as 'tis evident he could origi-
nally have no regard to one more than to
another, so when the various dispensations
of infinite Wisdom shall at the great Pe-
riod and Consummation of Nature have
accomplished and unfolded *the mystery of*
God,

SERM. God, it will manifestly appear, that finally also he has been *no Respector of Persons*. There are indeed in Scripture many particular *instances*, which at first sight may seem not easily reconcileable with this great Truth: But the *general Rule itself* is so clearly and expressly laid down, and so perpetually repeated and appealed to upon every occasion; that no obscurity or difficulty in the explication of particular cases, can be opposed to the Evidence of so plain a Rule. The *general Proposition* we may depend upon as certain, however difficult it may appear at present to reconcile the *particulars*; and whatever *Clouds and Darknes* are round about him, yet we are sure *Righteousness and Judgment* are the *Habitation* of his *Seat*. 'Tis an observation of great importance, and necessary to be attended to in This, as in most other Doctrines of Religion; that *obscurer passages* of Scripture are always to be interpreted by the plain ones, and not the plain ones made doubtful by those that are more obscure. And the Reason is evident: Because that which is at present obscure, may very easily in the event of things and in the

unfolding

unfolding of Providence, have the difficulties removed, and make a final Harmony and Consistency of the whole; But if that which is once clearly and plainly revealed, in words express and full, and without ambiguity, is ever in any wise to be shaken by any after-discovery; or if a *general* and perpetual Rule can be made in any degree uncertain, and by the present difficulty of application of any *particular* case; there can Then never be *any* certain Assurance, of the Truth of *Any* Doctrine or Revelation at all. To apply this to our present Subject: Whatever difficulty there may be at present, in reconciling God's being no Respector of Persons, with the many seeming Advantages we find in Scripture granted at any time to one particular Nation, Family, or Person, more than to other Nations, Families, or Persons; (which Difficulty will come to be considered under my *Third* general head, wherein I proposed to remove the *Objections* that may be alleged against the Impartiality of the divine Justice;) Whatever Difficulty, I say, there may possibly be at present, in reconciling these Things to each other; yet the general

S E R M. *ral Declaration, or the universal Truth of*
 XVI. *the Doctrine itself, that God is no Re-*
 specter of Persons, is so clearly and distinctly, so expressly and fully, so constantly and with such earnestness laid down and inculcated in every part of the Scripture, as a *Foundation never to be departed from* in all questions of Religion; that we may be very sure, God will thoroughly justify it in the end; and show us, that whatever Now appears to us as an exception to this Rule, was nothing else but our beholding in an imperfect and broken View, only some small portions of his All-wise Proceedings. In the *infancy* of the world, the Patriarch *Abraham*, when he took upon him to plead with God for *Sodom*, lays down This as a Rule or Foundation, upon which every Argument must for ever be built, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Gen. xviii. 23. In the book of *Job*, *Elihu*, disputing with *Job's* friends, argues in like manner from the Light of Nature and common Reason; *ch. xxxiv. 1, — 19. Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge; — God accepteth not the persons of Prin-*
 ces,

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ces, nor regardeth the Rich more than the SERM.
poor, for they all are the work of His XVI.

hands. In the revelation God made of himself to Moses, the character he commanded Moses to give of him to the Israelites, is exactly agreeable to the same Natural Notion; Deut. x. 14, 17. Behold, the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens is the Lord's thy God, the Earth also with all that therein is; ----- he is a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. In the book of Psalms, wherein are devoutly celebrated all the divine Attributes, the Justice of God is Thus likewise set forth; Ps. xcvi. 9. With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people (that is, all nations) with Equity. In the instructions given by good King Jehoshaphat to the Judges which he appointed through all the Cities of Judah; the same Notion of the impartiality of the divine Justice, is still preserved; 2 Chr. xix. 7. Let the fear of the Lord, (says he) be upon you; take heed, and do righteousness; for there is no ini-

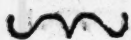
S E R M. *quity with the Lord our God, nor respect*
 XVI. *of persons, nor taking of Gifts.* In the
 Writings of the Prophets, this Justice of
 God, in opposition to all Respecting of
 persons, is still more emphatically exprest;
Jer. xxii. 24. As I live, saith the Lord;
Though Coniah the Son of Jehoiakim King
of Judah, were the signet upon my
right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.
 And concerning the whole nation of the
 Jews, that peculiar people of God; elect,
 and beloved for the Father's sake; to
 whom in a singular manner, were com-
 mitted the divine oracles; and of whom
 it was written, that God *did not deal so*
with any other nation, neither had the
Heathen knowledge of his laws; yet even
 concerning This people, when they trans-
 gressed the Law that had been given
 them, *Will he regard your Persons,* saith
 the Divine Justice? *Mal. i. 9. I have no*
pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts,
neither will I accept an offering at your
hand: For from the rising of the Sun even
unto the going down of the same, my name
shall be great among the Gentiles, --- and
my name shall be great among the Heathen,
saith the Lord of Hosts. In the New Testa-
 ment,

ment, our Saviour in the Gospel repeats the same doctrine to the Pharisees, Mat. xxi. S E R M.
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43. *The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof: And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven; But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. For, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord; (not every Professor of the true Religion, not every member of the People or Church of God,) shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. In the Acts of the Apostles, ch. x. 34. Of a Truth, saith St Peter, I perceive that God is no respecter of Persons; But in every Nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness,*

SERM.

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ousness, is accepted with him. In their Epistles, the same doctrine is perpetually inculcated as the Foundation of all religion: Rom. ii. 6,---10. God will render to every man according to his deeds, --- to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; --- In the day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ. Again, Ephes. vi. 8. Whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free,---for there is no respect of persons with him; Likewise, he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done; and there is no respect of persons. These repeated Declarations of Scripture from one End of the Bible to the other, are so full and plain, that, were the difficulties which arise from particular cases, to our apprehension altogether unanswerable, (as I shall show in its proper place they by no means are, when I come to consider the several Objections that may be alleged;) yet the general Doctrine itself would nevertheless be

Col. iii.
25.

be certain and established as a *first Principle*, as a fundamental *Rule* of interpretation, to which every thing else must of necessity be understood to agree; viz. that *God*, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work.

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1 Pet. i.
17.

AND this is the *first* particular, included in the Notion of divine Justice; an *Impartiality* with regard to Persons. The *second*, is an *Equity* of distribution, with regard to Things; That is, the observing an exact proportion in the several *particular* degrees of Reward and Punishment, as well as an *Impartiality* in determining what Persons shall be in *general* rewarded or punished. But the enlargement upon *This* Head, must be referred to a farther opportunity.



[illegible]



SERMON XVII.

Of the JUSTICE of GOD.



JOB xxxiv. 10, 11, 12.

Therefore hearken unto Me, ye men of Understanding: Far be it from God, that He should do Wickedness; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity: For the Work of a Man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his Ways: Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment.



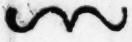
IN my last Discourse I proposed to treat of the Divine Justice after the following Method: 1st, to prove that God is and cannot but be Just; 2^{dly}, to explain wherein the Nature of

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SER M. of that Justice consists; 3dly, to remove
 XVII the Objections arising from particular
 cases against this general Truth: And finally, to apply what shall be said, by some useful Inferences in Practice. In the first place, that God is and cannot but be Just, I have already proved at large: Secondly, in explaining wherein the Nature of this divine Justice consists, I observed that it includes, (1st) an Impartiality with regard to Persons; and (2dly) an Equity of Distribution, with regard to Things. Concerning the Impartiality of the divine Justice with regard to Persons, I have already discoursed. That which I am now to proceed to in the next place, according to the Method proposed, is to show that it denotes likewise an Equity of distribution, with regard to Things. That is to say; it includes the observing an exact proportion in the several particular degrees of Reward and Punishment, as well as an Impartiality in determining what Persons shall be in general rewarded or punished. And of This, the Scripture gives us a very clear and distinct Account: Assuring us, that they that be wise, that is, who
 Dan. xii. 3. Themselves obey the commandments of
 God,

God, shall shine as the Brightness of the SERM.
 Firmament; and they that turn many to XVII.
 righteousness, which is still a more excel-
 lent pitch of Virtue, shall be as the Stars,
 the distinguished Glory of the Firmament
 itself, for ever and ever: And that, even
 among These, as one star differeth from a- I Cor. xv.
 nother star in glory, so shall it be also at 41.
 the Resurrection of the dead. That one
 man, shall receive a Prophet's reward; Mat. x. 41.
 and another, the reward of a righteous
 man; and a third, in a rank still inferi-
 our to Both of these, yet for giving to
 drink but a cup of cold water to one of
 Christ's little ones, that is, to a person any
 way persecuted for conscience sake, shall
 in no wise lose his Reward. That, accord-
 ing to men's different improvements of
 the Talents committed to their charge,
 One shall be made Ruler over five Cities, Luk. xix.
 and another over ten. That every man 17.
 shall receive his own reward, according to I Cor. iii.
 his own labour; reaping sparingly or boun- 8.
 tifully, accordingly as he hath sparingly 2 Cor. ix.
 or bountifully sown: or, if he has built 6.
 bay and stubble, that is needless and un- I Cor. iii.
 profitable Doctrines upon the foundation 13.
 of Christ; so as in great measure to lose
 his

S E R M. his Reward, because his Work was use-

XVII. less; yet, if he was truly *sincere and up-*
 *right* in his intention, for the integrity of

1 Cor. iii. his Heart *He himself shall be saved*, tho'
 15. *so as by Fire*; that is, with great Diffi-
 culty, as a man escapes with his Life out
 of a house on Fire, wherein his Goods
 are consuming. Lastly, the different De-
 grees of the Reward of good men, are
 most elegantly set forth by *St John* in his
 Description, of the heavenly *Jerusalem*,
 as of a royal City; *the City*, as our Savi-
 our himself styles it, *the City of the Great*
King: within which, the *Glory of God's*
presence did more immediately shine, and
the Lamb was the Light thereof; and
 without, the *Nations of them that are sa-*
ved did walk in the *Light of it*, Rev. xxi.
 23; and ch. xxii. 2. *In the midst of it,*
was the Tree of Life, which yielded her
Fruit every Month, and the Leaves of the
Tree were for the Healing of the Na-
tions.

AGAIN on the other side, as in the di-
 stribution of *Rewards*, so in the allotment
 of the Degrees of *Punishment* likewise,
 does the Scripture clearly set forth to us
 the exact Impartiality of the Divine Ju-
 stice.



stice. The words of our Saviour are express and full, St *Luk.* xii. 47. *That Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many stripes; But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes: For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of Him they will ask the more.* Accordingly, against the *Pharisees*, who had the best opportunities of seeing and considering his mighty Works, our Saviour always denounces his severest Judgments for their Hypocrisy and Unbelief. Other sorts of Sinners, he always reprov'd with singular Tenderneſs, and exhorted to Repentance with all Meekneſs and Compaſſion; But the *Pharisees*, who finned against the clearest Light, and with the greatest Obſtinacy, he constantly challenged with the utmost ſharpneſs, as incorrigible hypocrites, as a generation of Vipers. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to Him it is Sin,* Jam. iv. 17. The *Pharisees* had a learned and a religious education; and they deſpiſed the

SERM. the rest of the people, as, in comparison
XVII. with themselves, blind and ignorant:

Yet their Lives were vitious, notwithstanding that Knowledge; and then, the very thing they boasted of, was their great Condemnation. *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no Sin; but Now ye say, We see; Therefore your Sin remaineth, Joh. ix. 41.* It remaineth; that is, you stand most clearly and most inexcusably convicted of it. Their Learning and Knowledge in the Law and the Prophets, qualified them to hear the words of Christ, and to observe his Works, with greater Advantage: And therefore he says unto them, *Joh. xv. 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; (that is, comparatively speaking, their Sin had been nothing, to what it Now is;) But Now, they have no cloak for their Sin; — If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had Sin; but Now they have both seen and hated, both Me and my Father.* And in proportion to This aggravation of their Fault, does he accordingly enhance the Severity of their Punishment; *These, saith he,*
shall

shall receive greater Damnation; Mar. xii. 40. He does not only threaten them with God's final wrath in general, in common with all other wicked men; O ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell? Mat. xxiii. 33; but he adds moreover in particular, ver. 14. Ye shall receive a greater Damnation: In the original it is, a more abundant condemnation; a Measure of Wrath, over and above the general Sentence which shall pass upon the World of the Ungodly.

IN like manner, comparing the whole Nation of the unbelieving Jews, with the infidel Heathen World; and considering how wilfully and with what aggravating circumstances They rejected those means of Salvation, which perhaps many of the Heathen would in the like case gladly have accepted; he accordingly declares concerning them, Mat. x. 15. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that City.

Lastly, IN that sublime and affectionate description of the great judgment, Rev. xx. 11, and 19, 20. there is made a very remarkable distinction of This kind:

S E R M.
XVII.
~

SER M. kind: *I saw a great white throne, and him
 XVII. that sat on it; from whose face the Earth
 and the Heaven fled away, and there was
 found no place for them: And I saw the
 dead, small and great, stand before God;
 and the books were opened, —and the dead
 were judged out of those things which were
 written in the Books, according to their
 Works: And whosoever was not found writ-
 ten in the book of Life, was cast into the
 lake of Fire. But the Beast and —the
 false Prophet, —which deceived the Na-
 tions, —these Both were cast Alive into
 the Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone.
 The Distinction made by Moses in the case
 of the first Death, Num. xvi. 29. If these
 men die the common death of all men, or if
 they be visited after the visitation of all
 men; then the Lord hath not sent Me; But
 if the Lord make a new thing, and the
 Earth open her mouth and swallow them
 up, —and they go down Quick [or Alive]
 into the pit; then ye shall understand that
 these men have provoked the Lord: The
 same distinction (I say) seems to be made by
 St John in the case of the second Death;
 These Two (saith he) were cast Alive into
 the lake of fire, burning with Brimstone;
 That*

That is, they were represented to be so SERMON.
distinguished in the degree of a *severer Punishment*, XVII. as they had been in the guilt of
a more *provoking Wickedness*.

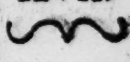
FROM all these passages of Scripture it abundantly appears, that the true and complete Notion of the Divine Justice, includes his observing an exact Proportion in the several *particular* Degrees of Reward and Punishment, as well as an Impartiality in determining what Persons shall be in *general* Rewarded or Punished.

Now This *Justice* of God, as it will in the *End* certainly exert itself according to this exact Proportion in the final Distributions of the Great day; so in the *present* intermediate Time, that God might not leave himself wholly without Witness, he has frequently in the course of his Providence given remarkable Preludes, or *particular* Instances and Significations of his *general* Intention, in extraordinary *Deliverances* of Good Men, and exemplary *Punishments* of the Bad, in all generations. His bringing in the *Flood* upon the World of the Ungodly, was a temporal Instance of his Justice: And our Lord tells us, that *as the days of Noah*
VOL. I. D d were,

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XVII.

were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; For as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark; And knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be, Mat. xxiv. 37. And as righteous Noah was then delivered in the Ark from temporal Destruction, by the divine Justice; so by a like figure, says the Apostle, Baptism also, that is, not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh, not the bare external Form or Ceremony, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God, shall finally save Us from everlasting Perdition. Again: The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, was another temporal Instance of the divine Justice, by which those Cities were set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire: Of eternal Fire; that is, not the Fire of Hell; for That, being invisible, cannot yet be said to be set forth for an example; But those Cities were made an Example by that temporal fire, the Effect whereof was eternal, bringing upon them remediless and endless

Jude vii.

less Destruction. And This, was an *Em-blem* or *Earnest* of God's *final* Justice. XVII. SERM.
 For so our Saviour argues, *St Luk. xviii.* 

28. *As it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all; Even Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.* And as just Lot was then delivered from *temporal* Death, by God's immediate miraculous interposition; so in the infliction of *eternal* Death, it may be depended upon, that *the Judge of all the Earth will do what is right, and will not destroy the righteous with the wicked.* Gen. xviii.
 In *This* sense, the plea of *Abraham* ^{23.}

was undoubtedly just, and will finally be verified without exception; though in the *present* mixt state of things, the Nature of God's government of this world is such, that (unless in extraordinary cases, for particular standing examples,) the righteous for the more part are indeed involved in common calamities with the wicked, and the wicked enjoy the Blessings of Providence in common with the Righteous.

THERE have been *some* persons so unreasonable, as, from the general Notion

S E R M. of the Divine Goodness, to frame to them-
 XVII. selves an imagination, that God should
 finally punish no Offenders at all; but,
 in the *future* state, reward those who are
 capable of it, and destroy the rest imme-
 diately without any punishment at all. But
 if Punishment is in the *present* state, for the
 support of Laws and of good Government,
 just and righteous; nay, and no less con-
 sistent with *Goodness* too; than requisite
 in *Justice*: For the same reason, in the
future state likewise, it is just and righte-
 ous; nay, and consistent with *Goodness* too;
 For the universal Laws and Government
 and Kingdom of God, continue for ever.
 In their *own* case, when they themselves
 are the Parties offended, men always think
 it reasonable that Offenders should be pu-
 nished; nay, and often complain of Pro-
 vidence, for not punishing them sooner.
 And shall it not be thought reasonable, in
 the Government of the Universe, that in
 the future *eternal* state, as well as in the
 present *temporary* one, such Punishment
 should be inflicted on impenitent Offend-
 ers, as infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice,
 and Goodness in Conjunction, judges ex-
 actly proportional to the demerit of each
 Criminal, and most proper to answer the
 Ends

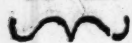
Ends of the divine Government, in sup-
porting the Honour and Dignity of the
eternal and universal Laws of God's
boundless and everlasting Kingdom?

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XVII.

III. I proceed now in the *Third* place,
to consider the *Objections* arising from
particular cases, against the *general* Doc-
trine of the Divine Justice.

And *first*; THAT great and *general*
Objection, which has in all Ages been
drawn from the unequal Distributions of
Providence in the *present* life, is suffici-
ently answered by the Belief of a *Future*
state; wherein, by the exactness and pre-
cise equity of the final Determinations of
the Great Day, shall be abundantly made
up all the little Inequalities of this short
life, which is but for a moment. Besides
which *general* and full Answer, there are
also many *special* reasons of these seeming
inequalities; which show them to be not
only *consistent* with, but even to be beau-
tiful *Parts* of the All-wise Design of
Providence, in governing the World,
through all variety of circumstances with
final Equity and exactness of Justice. God
frequently afflicts the Righteous, for the
trial and improvement of their virtue,

SERM.
XVII.



for the exercise of their patience, for the correction of their faults, and for purging them that they may bring forth more and more fruit. *I will refine them, as silver is refined; and will try them as gold is tried, Zech. xiii. 9. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge, and to make them white, Dan. xi. 35; and ch. xii. 10. Many shall be purified and made white and tried. Having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself: As gold in the furnace has he tried them, and received them as a burnt-offering, Wisd. iii. 5. And 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your Faith being much more precious, than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, God frequently, for no less wise reasons, defers punishing the wicked; nay, as the Psalmist complains, makes them remarkably prosperous in the World: Sometimes, to make them instruments in the hands of Providence for the Punishment of Others;*

Pf. lxxiii.

as in the case of Tyrants, and publick Oppressors. Sometimes, to cause their Punishment, when it comes finally upon them, to be more exemplary and remarkable; as in the case of *Pharaoh*, and of those profane persons, whose *End* cleared the Psalmist's mind of those doubts, which their Prosperity had raised in him at the *Beginning*. At other times, God does it to show his Mercy and Forbearance, and to give men Time and Space for Repentance; *enduring with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*. Therefore, says the Author of the book of *Wisdom*, *chastenest thou them by little and little, that offend; --- that leaving their Wickedness, they may believe on Thee: --- Not that thou wast unable --- to destroy the ungodly at once; --- But executing thy judgments upon them by little and little, thou gavest them place of repentance, --- whereby they might be delivered from their malice, ch. xii. 2, 9, 10, 20.*

SERM.
XVII.

Rom. ix.
22.

BUT besides this obvious and general Objection against the Justice of Providence, in the distribution of temporal good things; there are also particular

S E R M. difficulties arising from singular inequa-
 XVII. lities even with regard to spiritual ad-
 ~~~~~ vantages, which deserve to be distinctly  
 considered. Thus, since God is the com-  
 mon Creator and Lord of all men; since  
 Deut. x. *the heaven is his, and the earth also, with*  
 14, 17, 18. *all that therein is; since he declares that*  
*he regardeth not persons, nor taketh re-*  
*ward; but loveth the stranger, in giving*  
*him food and raiment; and has promised*  
*to judge the World with righteousness, and*  
*the Nations with equity: Well may it be*  
*inquired how is That which follows con-*  
*sistent with impartial Justice, when in*  
*so distinguishing a manner, in the very*  
*same place which some of these general*  
*declarations are made, 'tis said to the*  
*Jews in particular, ver. 15. Only the*  
*Lord had a delight in thy Fathers to love*  
*them, and he chose their seed after them,*  
 Ps. cxlvii. *even you above all people: He did not deal*  
 20. *so with any other nation, neither had the*  
*Heathen knowledge of his Laws: And all*  
*This, not for any merit in the persons*  
*themselves; For he saith, Rom. ix. 11.*  
*concerning children not yet born, neither*  
*having done any good or evil; --- Jacob*  
*have I loved, but Esau have I hated; that*  
 is,

## Of the Justice of GOD.

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is, (as the Apostle himself explains it,) *the* SERM.  
*Elder shall serve the Younger; the Poste-* XVII.  
*rity of Jacob have I chosen to be my pe-*  
*culiar people, and not the Posterity of E-*  
*sau.* Now the true Answer to this diffi-  
culty, is This. As God may very justly  
exercise his Power and Wisdom in ma-  
king great Variety of Creatures, and was  
not at all obliged to make *Men Angels*:  
so neither is he obliged to indue all *Men*,  
with all the *same* Faculties and Advan-  
tages; to make them *all* capable, of the  
very *same* Kind and Degree of Happiness;  
or to afford *all of them*, all the very *same*  
means and opportunities of obtaining it.  
*Impartial Justice* consists, not in dealing  
withall persons *alike*, but in dealing with  
all persons *proportionably*. And *Wisdom*  
appears even much *more*, in that diversity  
of distributions; which at the same time  
diminishes nothing from Justice. 'Tis as  
just with God, to intrust one man origi-  
nally with two talents, as another with  
ten; And he that with the improvement  
of those two talents, gains to himself two  
more, has as much Justice done him, as  
he that with the improvement of ten ta-  
lents gains to himself other ten. God di-  
vides



S E R M. *vides to every Man, and to every Nation,*  
 XVII. *what Advantages and Favours he himself*  
 pleases; with great Wisdom, and without  
 any Injustice: And when he comes finally  
 to judge the whole Earth, it will appear  
 in that great Variety of Circumstances in  
 all kinds, that, upon the whole, *be that*  
*gathered much, had nothing over, and be*  
*that gathered little, had no lack.* This is  
 what the Apostle excellently expresses, in  
 the whole 2d chapter to the Romans;  
 and particularly ver. 6. *God will render*  
*to every man according to his deeds, --- to*  
*the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; For*  
*there is no respect of Persons with God;*  
*But as many as have sinned without the*  
*Law, shall also perish without Law; and*  
*as many as have sinned in the Law, shall*  
*be judged by the Law, --- in the day when*  
*God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus*  
*Christ.* But there is also, besides This,  
 another particular reason of God's diffe-  
 rent dispensations towards the Jews and  
 Gentiles, expressed at large by St Paul in  
 the 11th to the Romans, and summed up  
 briefly in the following words, ver. 12,  
 and 30. *If the Fall of them [of the Jews]*  
*be the Riches of the World, and the Dimi-*  
*nishing*



## Of the Justice of GOD.

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nothing of them the Riches of the Gentiles, SERM. XVII.  
how much more their Fulness? — For as  
ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief [the unbelief of the Jews] Even so have These also now not believed, that through your mercy They also may obtain mercy; For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all: O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God!

AGAIN, if it be objected against the Impartiality of the Divine Justice, that since our Saviour declares, if the same means had been used with the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, that had been used Luk. x. 13.  
towards the cities of the Jews, they would Mat. xi. 21.  
have repented; why then were not those means offered them? and since in the Parable he sets forth, that some worked in the Vineyard much longer than others; why then did they receive but all equally a penny? The answer to these difficulties is plain, both from what has been already said, and from what our Saviour suggests in the Places themselves. As the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon were of a less obstinate disposition, than some of the Jews

ish

S E R M.

XVII.

Mat. xi.

22.

*ish Cities; so he declares it should fare proportionably better with them at the day of Judgment: I say unto you; it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you: And elsewhere; Many (says he) shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God; and ye yourselves (the children of the Kingdom) shall be shut out into outer darkness. Then as to the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard; if it be understood of the different Ages of the World, concerning the Jews and Gentiles; as 'tis plain it was primarily meant; there is then no difficulty in it. But if it be understood of the different periods of mens lives, (as it may also be) yet still the penny given equally to them all, may be understood of Heaven in general, not exclusive of very different degrees in that One state of Happiness which shall itself in the whole be common to them all. Or lastly, If the penny given to them that came in in the last period of their lives, were to be understood even of an equality in degree, with those who came in first; yet even still there would*

be no injustice in this matter; because S. R. E. M. XVII.  
 God may do what he pleases with the  
 abundance of what is his own, and  
 wrongs no man by giving to others his  
 free and undeserved Gifts. Nevertheless,  
 though God *may justly* act in these cases  
 as he pleases, without giving *us* any rea-  
 son of his acting; yet in reality, 'tis most  
 reasonable to suppose he never *does* act  
 arbitrarily, without a reason which *he* sees,  
 though we do *not*. To Him that sees the  
 Heart, a true Penitent, even after many  
 and long transgressions, may possibly  
 come to *exceed* in Virtue, even those  
 who have from the Beginning lived more  
 regularly and innocently. The antient  
*Jews* had a Proverb, that no man could  
 equal the Zeal of a sincere Penitent; and  
 St Paul's description of such a person is  
 very emphatical, 2 Cor. vii. 11. *Behold,*  
*this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed af-*  
*ter a godly sort, what carefulness it*  
*wrought in you; yea, what clearing of*  
*yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea,*  
*what fear; yea, what vehement desire;*  
*yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge!*

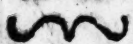
THE Uses of this whole Discourse con-  
 cerning the Justice of God, are;

I. LET



SERM.

XVII.



I. LET us acknowledge and submit to the Divine Justice, and show forth our due Sense and Fear of it in the course of our Lives. This is St Peter's inference, 1 Pet. i. 17. *If ye call on the Father, who without respect of Persons judgeth according to every man's work; pass the time of your sojourning here in Fear.*

2. A right Notion of the Justice of God, is matter of Comfort to good men; who, if they sincerely endeavour to perform their duty, know that with a just and righteous God there can be no secret Decree to exclude them from Happiness. God is not unrighteous, (so the Apostle expresses it, Heb. vi. 10.) *to forget your work and labour of love.* Wherefore however dark the ways of Providence may seem at present, yet *Let not thine heart envy Sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, For surely there is a reward, and thine expectation shall not be cut off,* Prov. xxiii. 17.

3. THE Justice of God, is matter of Terror to all wicked and unrighteous men, how great and powerful soever they may be. He accepteth not the persons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor;



poor; for they All are the work of his SERM.  
 hands, Job xxxiv. 19. He which is Lord XVII.  
 over all, shall fear no man's person, neither  
 shall he stand in awe of any man's great-  
 ness; for he hath made the small and great,  
 and careth for all alike, Wisd. vi. 7.  
 And Rev. vi. 15. The Kings of the Earth,  
 and the great men, and the rich men, and  
 the chief captains, and the mighty men,  
 --- hid themselves in the dens and in the  
 rocks of the mountains, --- from the face  
 of him that sitteth on the throne, and from  
 the wrath of the Lamb.

4. FROM the consideration of the Ju-  
 stice of God, who has Power freely to  
 forgive, and punishes None but where the  
 highest Reason requires it; arises a True  
 Notion of the heinousness of Sin, and of  
 the inexcusableness and self-condemnation  
 of sinners; who knowing the righteous  
 judgment of God, that they who do such  
 things are worthy of death, not only do  
 the same, but have pleasure in them that  
 do them.

Lastly, and to conclude; IF God, who  
 is All-powerful and Truly Supreme, and  
 Accountable to None for what he does,  
 yet always confines himself to what is  
 just

SERM. just and righteous, and appeals even to  
 XVII. *Us also, to judge of his so Doing; saying,*  
*W Judge, I pray you, between Me and my*  
*Vineyard; how then dare mortal men in-*  
*sult and tyrannize over each other, and*  
*think themselves by Power and Force dis-*  
*charged from all obligations of Equity*  
*towards their Fellow-creatures? Be wise*  
*now therefore: O ye Kings, says the ex-*  
*perienced Preacher Solomon, be instructed,*  
*ye that are Judges of the Earth.*

The End of the First Volume.



A Catalogue of the *WORKS* of the Reverend  
Dr SAMUEL CLARKE, in the Order of  
Time, in which They were published.

I. **J**ACOBI Rohaulti Physica, &c. Translated from the *French* into *Latin*, with Large Annotations: In 8vo. first published in 1697. Of this there have been already *four* Editions, in Every one of which Improvements have been made, especially in the last, 1718.

II. Three Practical Essays on Baptism, Confirmation, and Repentance, &c. 1699. *Four* Editions of this have been printed.

III. Some Reflexions on that part of a Book called *Amyntor*, which relates to the Writings of the Primitive Fathers, and the Canon of the New Testament. A small Tract first published 1699. without a Name; and since, added to Dr Clarke's Letter to Mr Dodwell, &c.

IV. A Paraphrase on the Four Evangelists, with Critical Notes, &c. That on St *Matthew* was first published, 1701. A Second Volume on St *Mark* and St *Luke* followed in 1702: and after this a Third Volume on St *John*. They were soon all reprinted together, in Two Volumes, 8vo. A *Fourth* Edition has been lately published.

V. A Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of GOD; the Obligations of Natural Religion; and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, &c. These were the Sermons He preached at Mr *Boyle's* Lecture, 1704, 1705. They were printed in Two distinct Volumes; The For-



mer, in 1705. The Latter in 1706. Since That, They have been printed all together in One Volume, and have pass'd thro' several Editions. In the 4th and 5th Editions were added several Letters to Dr *Clarke*, from a Gentleman, relating to the first Part of this Book, with the *Doctor's* Answers. In the 6th and 7th Editions were added, A Discourse concerning the Connexion of the Prophecies, &c. And an Answer to a Seventh Letter concerning the Argument *à Priori*.

VI. A Letter to Mr *Dodwell*——about the Immortality of the Soul, and the Judgment of the Fathers, &c. first printed in 1706. After this, soon followed *Four Defenses* of It, in *four* several Letters to the Author of the *Remarks* on the forementioned Letter. They are all printed together in a 5th Edition: And the Answer to *Amyntor*, added to Them.

VII. *Isaaci Newtoni Optice*. This is a Translation of Sir *Isaac Newton's* Optics, from the *English* into *Latin*: first published in 4to. 1706. Afterwards in 8vo. 1719.

VIII. *C. Julii Cæsaris quæ extant, &c.* 1712. This is a very Pompous and Beautiful Edition, in *Folio*, of *Cæsar's* Commentaries, accurately compared with the Best MSS. and illustrated with the Doctor's Notes. This Book was afterwards reprinted, for common Use, in 8vo. 1720.

IX. The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, In Three parts, &c. In 8vo. First published, in 1712. Afterwards, there was A Second Edition, with some Alterations, in 1719.

X. Three short Papers, occasioned by the Complaint of the Lower House of Convocation against the Foremention'd Book: viz. A Reply to the Extract of Particulars made by the Lower-house: A Paper laid before the Bishops: A Paper delivered



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to the Bishop of *London*: All printed in a little Piece called an *Apology for Dr Clarke*, 1714. Together with Part of a *Letter from Him to a Friend*.

XI. A Letter to the Reverend Dr *Wells*, in Answer to his Remarks upon the foregoing Treatise, 1714.

XII. A Reply to the Objections of *Robert Nelson*, Esq; and an Anonymous Writer; being a Commentary on *forty Texts*: Together with an Answer to the Remarks of [Bp *Gastrel*] the Author of some Considerations upon the Trinity, &c. 1714.

XIII. Dr *Clarke's* Answers to Three Letters writt to Him by a Clergyman concerning his Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity; published, together with the Letters, by that Clergyman himself, 1714.

XIV. A Collection of Papers which passed between the late learned Mr *Leibnitz* and Dr *Clarke*, relating to the Principles of Natural Philosophy and Religion: To which are added, Letters from *Cambridge* to Dr *Clarke*, Concerning Liberty and Necessity, with the Doctor's Answers: And, Remarks upon a Book entitled, *A Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty*, 1717. 8vo.

XV. A Letter to the late Reverend Mr *R. M. Mayo* concerning his plain Scripture-Argument.

XVI. A Letter to the Author of a Book entitled *The True Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*, continued, and vindicated; Recommended first by Mr *Nelson*, and since, by Dr *Waterland*. These Two little pieces were published, 1719. at the End of a Tract of Another Author, entitled, *The Modest Plea*.

XVII. *The Modest Plea*, &c. continued; Or, A Brief and Distinct Answer to Dr *Waterland's* Queries, relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity, 1720.

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XXII. Homeri Ilias. Græcè & Latinè. Annotationes, &c. This was the last Piece He published viz. The first Twelve Books of *Homer's Ilias*, with the Translation accurately corrected, and Learned Notes, 1729. in 4to. N. B. It is hoped that the Papers He has left behind Him will furnish out the remaining Twelve Books of that Poem, in a very good manner.

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